

**The Non-Recognition or Devaluation of Foreign Professional Immigrants’  
Credentials in Canada: The Impact on the Receiving Country (Canada) and the  
Immigrants**

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## **Abstract**

This research thesis is concerned with the problem of the non-recognition or devaluation of the credentials of foreign professional immigrants in Canada. For decades, the Canadian government has admitted large numbers of highly skilled immigrants to support the growth and competitiveness of the Canadian economy. While it is an obvious fact that highly trained emigrants are persuaded to go to Canada where financial rewards are higher, the majority of these foreign professionals face systemic and structural barriers of not having their credentials recognized within the Canadian labor market, and as a result many are often forced into unskilled jobs to survive. The general aim of the thesis is to try and show that the non-recognition of foreign professional credentials in Canada is a serious socio-economic problem that needs urgent and continuous attention by various concerned stakeholders.

The general position taken in the thesis is that the trajectory of the discriminatory nature of Canadian immigration policy, systemic discriminatory /inconsistent policies and practices of Canadian credentials evaluators, along with the requirement of Canadian experience and language proficiency, have all have contributed in one way or the other to exacerbate the problem of foreign professional credentials non-recognition/devaluation in Canada. In developing this position the thesis draws on a variety of prevalent academic literatures and is complemented by statistical records. It has the particular aim of showing that any serious attempt to ‘fix’ the problem of the non-recognition of foreign professional credential must include direct attention to a number of factors outlined in the paper.

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**Purpose of Study/ Rationale:**

In an era of globalization, where trade associations, partnerships as well as technological development and advancement have become the order of the world attention and interest, the need for highly skilled/professional immigrants to help Canada compete effectively in the international arena becomes the focus of the Government and all relevant stakeholders within Canadian society as well as other countries of the Global North.

Contrary to the notion that immigration policy's increased focus on family and refugee classes resulting in the admission of immigrants who are less educated, studies have proved that the percentage of immigrants with university degrees and skilled-trade professional are higher than those for the Canadian-born population. In spite of the high qualifications and work related experiences, many foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades immigrants face downward social mobility after immigrating to Canada, especially in the Greater Toronto Area. Many of these professional and skilled-trades immigrants often resort to odd jobs such as taxicabing, truck driving, or factory or domestic work in order to survive, which has resulted in the under-utilization of vital human capital brought into the Greater Toronto Area by those immigrants.

While it is an obvious fact that highly trained emigrants are lured to Canada where financial rewards are higher, the majority of these foreign professionals are facing systemic and structural barriers of not having their credentials recognized within Canadian labor markets, and as a result they are forced into unskilled jobs to survive.

For decades, the Canadian government admitted large numbers of highly skilled immigrants to support the growth and competitiveness of the Canadian economy. Yet, once immigrants arrive in Canada many of their foreign credentials and work experiences are often devalued (see Bauder, 2003a; Krahn et al., 2000; Li, 2001; Mata, 1999; Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities, 2002). As a result, successive immigrant cohorts are suffering declining average incomes, in spite of their rising education levels (Boyd & Thomas, 2001; Reitz, 2001).

The non-recognition of credentials, training and job experience from immigrants' home countries continues to represent a major policy challenge for both the federal and provincial governments of Canada. Even though there is evidence that the introduction of the point system in the immigration policy was designed to erase the exclusion of immigrants based on their sex and race, nevertheless there are still biases that are not as overt as before in the present day immigration policy. Foreign trained professionals are normally faced with both systemic and personal barriers preventing their integration into the Canadian work force. As an educated immigrant from one of the countries of the Global South and who, during the course of my stay in Canada, experienced credential devaluation, I am personally motivated by this topic and I believe that my contributions will help bring more awareness to the issue of the devaluation of credentials of Canadian immigrants.

## **1. Introduction**

Historically, migration has been strongly connected to economic development and social advancement, and has often been seen not only as the outcome of inequality in development but also as an important influence on development. In other words, migration could be evaluated as both valuable and harmful to development, depending on past as well present circumstances and conditions. This variation in perception of the effect of migration on development has thus affected the ways in which national and international migration and development policies are being formulated and executed. According to Sorensen et al. (2002), the view in Europe shifted in the latter quarter of the twentieth century from seeing migration as a factor contributing to economic growth in the receiving states and to development in the sending states, to a prevailing view that immigration pressures have reached intolerable levels.

While over a decade and a half ago, a United Nations report indicates that the number of migrants living outside of their home country increased from 154 million in 1990 to approximately 200 million by the beginning of twenty-first century (United Nations 2002) However, in 2016 the United Nation statistical report further reveal that “The number of international migrants — persons living in a country other than where they were born reached 244 million in 2015 for the world as a whole, a 41 per cent increase compared to 2000” (United Nation Statistical Report , 2016)

The impact of the migration transformation during the post-colonial era, in the view of Cornelius and Rosenblum (2004), depends not in the reality of global migration but rather in the scale of awareness, speed and diversity of intercontinental connections that have gone beyond state boundaries.



Traditionally, Canada has a long and rich knowledge and understanding of immigrants and immigration that remains extremely well-established within its sense of nationhood. This revolves around Canada having been, and continues to be, a home to immigrants from all over the world. Immigrants' presence and contributions to Canada have been and continue to be integral to nation building, cultural heterogeneity, as well as economic growth of Canada. For example, Greater Toronto Area in the Province of Ontario is one of the major immigrants' receiving cities because of its economic, social, and cultural diversities. Existing study reveals that there are over 2.4 million immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area alone.

[https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/gta\\_immigration\\_history.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/gta_immigration_history.html)

Li (2003) indicates that many important studies have established that immigrants have contributed to Canada in several ways, and that the Canadian state has gained immensely from immigration. Though times have changed, Statistics Canada (2004) establishes that immigrants, who consist of about 20% of the work force, have accounted for more than 70% of the labour output increase. In addition, Challinor (2011) emphasizes that foreign-born permanent residents are more than 20 percent of the country's population, and newly arrived immigrants now account for more than 50 percent of annual population growth. Today, the objective, or ideal, of the immigration system is to promote young-looking, bilingual, high-skill immigration with the intention of establishing profitable human capital within Canada's aging work force. In order to attract this specific kind of migrant, Challinor (2011) further emphasize that Canada has set in certain education and skills provisions that work to the advantage of potential migrants who have work experience, higher education, and English or French language abilities.

Currently, highly educated immigrants contribute immeasurably to Canada's competitive power in a global market arena. So far, their assimilation processes or procedures are sluggish and suboptimal in the sense that their unemployment rates are higher than their Canadian born counterparts. Consequently, the above statistics raises the question of fairness, given that there appear to be intractable workforce barriers, such as credential recognition and the demand for language and literacy proficiency, which hinders access to skilled employment and social mobility among some foreign professional immigrants.

While Canada prides itself as a 'welcome home' for immigrants, its immigration policy and practices do not always reflect this claim in regards to foreign trained professionals from outside preferred boundaries. Generally, Canada is known to be a country that operates on the liberal political theory of ethno-cultural neutrality, neutrality based on the premise of multiculturalism. While all liberal democracies promote the integration of immigrants and minorities into their societal fabric, Reitz (2003) suggest that the very presence of a shared culture tends to reveal that some level of non-neutrality will inevitably favour some individuals over others. Since Canadian society, according to Wotherspoon (2009), "is also highly stratified according to inequalities of class, gender, race and ethnicity, region and many other social factors" (Wotherspoon, 2009, p.225), discourses on minority rights and multicultural citizenship have called to question this presumption of neutrality with regards to professional skilled immigrants.

Research provides evidence that professionally skilled immigrants who arrive at the shores of Canada, and most especially those from developing or countries of the Global South, face substantial barriers, among which the non-recognition or devaluation of credentials is a major contributing factor to their lower occupational prospects (Boyd and Schellenberg, 2007).

Basically, throughout much of modern history to the present, education within a given society has and is been regarded and accepted as a key element to an individual economic accomplishment. Based on this premise, the Canadian government from its adoption of the 1967 point system until the present has continued to fashion her immigration policy towards the admissibility of highly-skilled immigrants based on their potential economic contribution to the country. Since human capital is considered a valuable resource and can be effectively exploited to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole, the structural as well as personal constraints most skilled immigrants' face in relation to re-accreditation requirements often act as obstacles to the full utilization of their skills. Boyd and Schellenberg (2007) emphasized that the lack of acknowledgement of these immigrants' credentials and experiences from their home countries places them at a disadvantage when they compete for entry into the Canadian labour force.

Alboim, Finnie, and Meng (2005) indicate that a degree held by an immigrant from a foreign institution of higher learning seems to have an income return of less than one third of a university held by a native-born Canadian on one hand. They further emphasize that on the other hand, a degree held by a white immigrant from a foreign institution of higher learning is given equal equivalency or worth to a Canadian degree by Canadian credentials evaluators. Hence, what Alboim, Finnie and Meng tend to imply here is that there is a racial bias against non-white professional immigrants when it comes to the issue of credential evaluation in Canada. While the standpoint of Albiom, Finnie and Meng might be subject to contestation from and by other theoretical scholars from various disciplines. However, the reality of the fact is that within Canada and Toronto to be precise, the credentials of professional and skilled immigrants from third world countries or countries from the outside of European or America, are in most cases non-recognized or devalued. It is also a fact that some of foreign-born migrants with a university

education do have high-level skills, but the majority of them are underemployed and their job satisfaction is low because of the devaluation of their credentials, thereby resulting in a significant amount of brain waste as well as the under-utilization of their vital human capital.

While the obvious disparity between the skills and education levels of economic-class migrants and labor market expectation in Canada is a concern that highlights both assimilation challenge in the post-industrial economy and a clear-cut division between immigration policy objective and results. However, accreditation of their credentials thus becomes a problem that needs immediate attention. And as such, a fairer accreditation of their credentials is therefore immediately required if Canada is to benefit more fully.

Following from the above outline of issues, this thesis examines the question/matter of non-recognition and/or devaluation of certain foreign professional credentials and its impact on Canada as well as the immigrants themselves. The paper relies on historical as well as existing research studies and is organized and developed along the lines of three (3) interdisciplinary main themes: (a) Policy- the historical nature of the Canadian Immigration Policy; (b) Socio-Political Thought- the barriers faced by professional skilled immigrants within Canadian labour market; and (c) Development- the impacts these barriers have on Canadian society and the immigrants themselves.

#### *Chapter (I):*

This section reflects on issues relating to how Canada's immigration policies have helped to influence the country's unique demographic composition. The purpose of this reflection is to explore the conditions shaping Canada's need for immigrants from the pre-industrial era through the industrial era to the post-industrial era (the era of professionalism and credentialism).

This section will also reflect on some of the negative attitudes directed towards earlier immigrants to Canada by Anglo-Saxon Canadian that have continued to influence governmental/immigration policies till present day. This thesis will argue that the issue of non-recognition of professional skilled immigrants' credentials is a mind-set of supposed racial superiority race: This revolves around *the historical fear of Anglo-Saxon employment security and in-security, which* has been transferred to present day. However, immigrants' historical contribution to Canadian society has often been de-valored, and thus the issue relating to foreign credential evaluation should not be seen as an isolated case but rather as a part of transferred historical negative attitudes towards immigrants.

### *Chapter (II)*

This chapter examines issues relating to some of the barriers faced by professional skilled immigrants within Canadian labour market as it relates to credentials re-accreditation, recognition as well as devaluation- i.e. both the systemic and individual barriers. In this regards, it will explore how structural barriers (The quality of immigrants credentials, lack of constituency and transparency) in areas relating to how professional credentials are evaluated in Canada, as well as how individual barriers (Language and Lack of Canadian work experience) have played to the justification of foreign-trained professional credentials devaluation within Canadian society.

### *Chapter (III)*

Chapter (3) examines the impacts the aforementioned barriers have on Canadian society and the immigrants. In this section, this research study will examine the effect that Non-Recognition or devaluation of professional trained immigrants' credentials has on Canadian

society as well as the immigrants themselves. The study will reflect, on one hand, that the Non-Recognition of professional trained immigrants' credentials has both positive and negative impact on Canadian society; and on the other hand, the thesis will show the detrimental impact that Non-Recognition of immigrants credentials has on the well-being of the professional trained immigrants within Canadian society.

## ***2. Theoretical Framework***

This thesis will address the above concern through the lens of education/migration nexus that incorporates the principles associated with the Cultural Deficit Model as it applies to areas relating to systemic racism (discriminatory practices of credentials evaluation by stakeholders) as well as employment inequality (lack of Canadian work experience). The Cultural Deficit Model (otherwise referred to as the Deficit Model) argues from the position that cultural traits and/or norms habitually connected with traditionally marginalized racial/ethnic groups (more precisely, Blacks and Latinos) prevent members of such groups from integrating and achieving upward socioeconomic mobility within the society in which they find themselves (Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

Murray and Fairchild, (1989) indicate that Cultural Deficit Model has been central in the advancement of a philosophy of social issues wherein they ascribe a personality's accomplishment to cultural influences as well as the designation of failure to an ethnic group. Thus, the cultural deficit model affirms that racial/ethnic minority groups are not as well qualified as their European majority counterpart because their cultural background is dysfunctional and lacking vital characteristics vis-à-vis the dominant white culture. (i.e. "deficit model of difference" (Shibao Guo 2007, p.37).

The viewpoint of cultural deficits places the problem of underachievement on the culture rather than the social institutions in through which underrepresented minorities do not progress. Though these models are intermittently presented in an effort to elucidate socioeconomic or educational differences, they are subsequently detrimental to marginalized people of non-European descent for the reason that they hinder efforts to encourage and support equality. Following through with the doctrine of the above theoretical framework, the statement of the problem associated with non-recognition or devaluation of foreign professional/skilled immigrants' credentials among different stakeholders are motivated by the reality that they fall within the periphery of the deficit model constrains within Canadian society. Professionally trained and skilled immigrants from Third World countries who come to Canada represent a form of racial or ethnic "difference" that serves as a rationale for their credentials to be devalued, or not given equal status, vis-a-vis Canadian born. The credentials of these professional immigrants are rendered obsolete or deficient by the accreditation bodies because their qualifications and work experiences are considered not commensurate to the Canadian standard. The irony surrounding this claim is that if these reasons are justifiable, then why are those immigrants not educated by the Canadian high commission in their home countries on the required status of their credentials for entry into Canada? Experience tell us that most of these professional immigrants are assured of better life in Canada and some of them are been encouraged to sell their assets in their home country and take the proceed to invest in their country of destination (Canada) But when they come into the country, it is defiantly a different ball game. They are faced with the problem of their credentials not being recognized or accredited. This is a core problem facing most professional immigrants from most third world countries.

### ***3. Methodological Approach:***

With respect to this thesis, it is important to set forth the methodological approach that will enlighten and structure the discussion on the issue of Non- Recognition or devaluation of foreign professional credentials and its impact on Canada as well as the immigrants themselves. In that regard, the thesis will apply the qualitative research method to interrogate the above concern. This preferred technique in relation to issue at stake will set the ground work for a wider discussion on the subject matter. This will involve the reviewing and analyzing of various secondary sources, such as historical books, research studies, scholarly articles, provincial legislation, websites, as well as statistical information from Statistics Canada in areas relating to immigration/migration, credentialism, racism/discrimination, as well as employment inequity.

From the analysis of these sources, I hope to walk my readers through the various areas to stress that non-recognition or devaluation of foreign professional credentials is detrimental to the Canadian economy as well as the over-all well-being of the immigrants themselves. The methodology is acceptable in theory because it incorporates “an array of well-reasoned exercises” (Visano 2006, p.97) that are reliable with the command of the interrogative theory building.



#### ***4. Chapter 1: Historical Trajectory of the Canadian Immigration policy***

The encouragement of people to migrate to Canada for a better way of life has been of symbolic importance in Canadian history, from the aboriginal people, some of whose ancestors travelled across the Bering Strait from Asia to the large numbers of the latest crop of newcomers (Troper Harold 2013). The chronicle of Canadian immigration does not only involve an organized population enlargement; it also represents both a mechanism of Canadian industrial growth as well as a reflection of Canadian morals and ethics. In addition, it has persistently been defiantly and conveniently culturally prejudiced (Driedger and Palmer 2011).

Through the history from the post European settlement period to the present, the nature of Canadian immigration policy has evolved in relation to three main goals: nation-building and the expansion of the economy and population; the needs of the labour market at the current stage of development; and the long-term integration of permanent migrants. These three areas in regards to the section of this chapter will be addressed from the perspective of the state of the Canadian immigration policy in its pre-industrial, industrial as well post-industrial era of its historical existence. This section is relevant to this thesis because I will go through the different stages on how the Canadian state has dealt with immigrants in relation to how and why they were needed at one point or the other in Canada.

Taking a brief flash back at the history of Canada, it is very clear that immigrants have contributed immensely to the population growth as well as economic development of the country. According to Avery (1995), “Canada between 1901 and 1911 experienced a 34 percent population growth as well as increase in economic development in areas of railroad, mining and lumber production, due to the presence and contributions of immigrants from outside of Canada”

(Avery 1995, p.21). From then to present day, immigrants have continued to affect in a positive way the population growth and economic development of Canada. Immigration policy has affected the purpose and the type of people that were needed to achieve that purpose. As a reference to the introductory section of this thesis, the issue relating to Canadian immigration policy will be address from three period-logical perspectives.

#### ***4.1 Canadian Immigration Policy in its Pre-Industrial Era:***

Every nation's immigration policy is written through an economic lens; it is first and foremost about what's good for the country economically. As a result, immigration directly and significantly determines/shape the demographic composition of nations. Historically, Canada was depicted as a White-settler protectorate (Abele and Stasiulis 1989; Stasiulis and Jhappan 1995), but Canada has never had a prescribed "Whites only" immigration policy as other nations did. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century and to a great extent the 18<sup>th</sup> century, according to Eccles and Forster (2013), European colonial administrations entrusted with the supervision of what would turn out to be Canada, did not consider settlement a major concern. Eccles and Forster emphasized that early European powers like the French and British appeared, at the outset of their immigration agendas, not ready to invest the enormous amount of resources and vigor needed to promote and support settlement. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, policy formation relating to the issue of settlement gradually began to change and the then colonial administration vigilantly and steadily encouraged settlement in Canada. Canada began to implement policy measures to deal with migration as well as immigration

Throughout the middle of the 19th century, Canada, and the western region in particular, was faced with an unpredictable and sluggish economic development. To help alleviate the

situation and sustain fresh marketable or organizational settlement, Lyle and Taylor (2007) reveals that the Canadian State engaged in a formal and gradual promotion of migrants from England, Scotland ,as well as the US to inhabit and help cultivate the agricultural lands. Remarkably among these new arrivals were the Irish immigrants, whose arrival brought major changes to the social and economic situation of then Canadian state. The arrival of the Irish in fact represented the first massive wave of non- Anglo-Scottish foreign immigrants to the land of Canada

In the late 19th century, Canada's future Prairie regions were opened to settlement; however, historical evidence as presented by Lyle and Taylor (2007) emphasized that active occupation did not take effect until a reliable market was established for the prairie agricultural products. As a precursor to sustaining and maintaining their objective, the need to encourage the inflow of productive immigrants from preferred countries was seen as a viable economic tactic to strengthen nationwide demand for domestic goods and encourage the nation's small manufacturing sector. In addition, Canada for the most part relied on immigrants to occupy the unpopulated lands in the west as a means of securing national sovereignty in these areas. Hence, the formulation of sustainable immigration policy became a top priority for the then Federal government of Canada following the 1867 Confederation.

Two years after Confederation in 1869, the federal government passed the first ***Immigration Act***, launching the fundamental structure of Canadian immigration policy. In principle, the first *Act* pursued an “open door” policy, but providing serious limitations on who could immigrate to Canada, especially for people or migrants with criminal backgrounds or record. The *Act* set out the specific conditions for transporting immigrants to Canada.

The Immigration Act places serious restrictions/limitations on people that are poor, that have health issues or concerns, as well as people with disabilities. The act also required an intended immigrant to post a bond of \$300.00 dollars, if such intended person or migrant is considered a threat or menace to public safety due to sickness or disease. In addition, ships' captains prior to entering Canada were required under the Act to have documented information of people with vision, hearing, as well as mental health issues on board their ships. The ship captains were also required under the Act to provide guarantee money equivalent to the travel cost as well as preliminary living expenses for immigrants that were considered destitute or poor. In addition to passing the *Immigration Act*, the federal government also opened immigration offices in Great Britain, continental Europe, and the United States. The rationale behind the creation of these offices was to promote Canada as a destination for migration and to help facilitate the process for immigrants. (Frideres (2006))

In 1872, the Canadian federal government passed the *Dominion Land Act* to encourage immigrant settlers to the west. Under the *Act*, male immigrants were promised free land if they decide to nurture the land and put up a stable residence within three years. The desire for farm goods, particularly hard wheat, corresponded with the election of Wilfrid Laurier's government, which without delay encouraged the settlement of the West with large-scale immigration. Subsequently, Canada's then minister of the interior, Clifford Sifton, prepared a refurbished and far-reaching program and was primed reluctantly to admit agricultural settlers from no other place other than the British Isles, Northern Europe and the US (Frideres, 2006). As a requirement for entry into Canada, a supposed immigrant who intends to come to Canada, in the words of Sifton, must be "A stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born of the soil, whose

forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, and a stout wife and half-dozen children is good quality." (Avery, 1995, p.21)

While the Canadian government adopted an “open door” policy in theory, early immigration policy was highly discriminatory in practice. Through its immigration offices, the federal government focused primarily on attracting farmers and labourers, while discouraging urban workers, artisans, and tradesmen. While the Sifton comments might be rejected as not the official position of the government policy on immigration, the historical evidence as established by Frideres (2006) revealed that from 1896 to the 1930s, the Canadian people, their politicians and immigration officials were not friendly but hostile to peasants in sheepskin coats. Immigration policy did not involve just an aggressive peopling of the Prairies; it was formulated within the framework of immigrants that falls within the ideological beliefs of the Canadian government and most English-speaking Canadians. That means immigrants with Caucasian ethnicity, and most preferably of European or American descent. The ideal immigrants were still British or American independent farmers who would settle in the West, while categorizing those who did not originate from the British Isles as foreign. Sifton and the government may only have reflected their times, but Canadian immigration policy and public opinion were nevertheless racist (Frideres, 2006). Pressed to increase the inflow of immigration by business and railway interests with a mental picture of an insatiable world demand for Canadian resources, Sifton and his immigration authorities seized the opportunity to toughen their racial partiality against a panic-stricken search for settlers. They listed ideal settlers in a descending preference: British and American agriculturalists were followed by French, Belgians, Dutch, Scandinavians, Swiss, Finns, Russians, Austro-Hungarians, Germans, Ukrainians and Poles. Close to the bottom of the list came those who were, in both the public and the government's

minds, less assimilable and less desirable, e.g., Italians, South Slavs, Greeks and Syrians. At the very bottom came Jews, Asians, Roma people and Black persons. (See also Frideres, 2006)

#### ***4.2: Canadian Immigration Policy in its Industrial Era***

Before 1896, when Canada was primarily an agricultural nation, immigrants were sought to populate rural lands across the country. The Canadian government immigration policies then were geared towards foreign settlers to help cultivate and develop the land. But as industrial development accelerated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, immigrants were needed to meet the needs in urban factory work and construction. The Canadian immigration policies changed in order to meet the demand of economic industrialization, hence causing a change in the ethnic composition of required immigrants. The then Canadian government was desperately poised during this era in acquiring foreign cheap labour at all cost in order to sustain their position within the industrialized economies. The position of the then Canadian government, as indicated by Avery (1995), emphasized that, “it did not matter where immigrants come from as long as they could be made to fit Canada’s economic priorities...their ability to adjust to the environmental and occupational demand of Canada’s frontier” (Avery 1995, p.23); once they met these conditions they would be given entry passage into the country.

As a departure from the fairly free entry allowed from 1867 to 1895, a host of new policies formalized the Canadian immigration system while restricting admission to "white" American, British, and European applicants — to the exclusion of migrants from the rest of the world who could not trace their racial or ethnic origins to Europe. These policies included a number of orders-in-council (administrative decisions issued by the government), such as the 1906 Immigration Act. According to Frank Oliver, the then Minister of the Interior, the purpose

of the Act as contained in the Canadian Council for Refugees article titled, “A chronology focusing on refugees and discrimination” “*A hundred years of immigration to Canada 1900 – 1999*” was

"To enable the Department of Immigration to deal with undesirable immigrants by providing a means of control: The Act enshrined and reinforced measures of restriction and enforcement. The categories of "prohibited" immigrants were expanded. The Act also gave the government legal authority to deport immigrants within two years of landing (later extended to three and then five years). Grounds for deportation included becoming a public charge, insanity, infirmity, disease, handicap, becoming an inmate of a jail or hospital and committing crimes of "moral turpitude". Such deportations had occurred prior to 1905 without the benefit of law, but after 1906, numbers increased dramatically."

In 1910, a subsequent Immigration Act, as also indicated in the Canadian Council for Refugees article was enacted.

"This Act gave the government enormous discretionary power to regulate immigration through Orders in Council. Section 38 allowed the government to prohibit landing of immigrants under the "continuous journey" rule, and of immigrants "belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada, or of immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character". The Act also extended the grounds on which immigrants could be deported to include immorality and political offenses (Section 41). The Act introduced the concept of "domicile" which was acquired after three years of residence in Canada (later five years)." <http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-part-2>

In 1914, the First World War broke out, and throughout the federal government enforced greater limitations on immigration to Canada. Under the backdrop of national safety protection, the government suspended all immigration from adversary countries, including Germany, Austria, and Hungary. In addition, Troper (2013) indicates that residents from those nations now living in Canada were documented as enemy aliens under the *War Measures Act, 1914*. As a consequence, these residents were obligated to register with the government and carry identification cards, and were banned from joining any associations or movement considered prohibited by the federal government. Troper (2013) further stressed that several “enemy aliens”

were also placed in internment camps or involuntarily deported from Canada. In 1917, the federal government further introduced the *Wartime Elections Act*, removing the right to vote from any “enemy alien” who had received citizenship after 1902.

Due to the considerable concern and political and economic suspicions about, for example, the rise of communism, organized labour movements, and eventually the Great Depression, the Canadian federal government’s hard policy stance on immigration persisted after the war. This hard stance stemmed from the fact that the then Canadian federal government viewed the “open door” immigration policy approach as a threat to the country’s political as well economic stability. Accordingly, the federal government adopted a more exclusionary immigration position by excluding immigrants of certain ideological, religious, or ethnic backgrounds. The objective behind this was to promote social harmony and control as well as protecting Canadian workers from losing their jobs to “cheap” foreign labour.

In 1919, a new Immigration Act was introduced, providing the federal government with new powers to exclude specific groups from immigrating to Canada. According to the Canadian Council for Refugees:

“Section 38 of the new *Act* allowed the government to limit or prohibit the entry of undesirable races or nationalities. Under Section 38, the federal government prohibited the entry of nationalities that had fought against Canada and Britain in the war, including those from Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Turkey. The government also used Section 38 to prohibit the entry of Doukhobers, Hutterites and Mennonites, due to their particular religious practices. Section 41 of the *Act* further allowed the government to deport anti-government and business activists. Overall, the government’s primary concern was the rise of communism and socialism following the Russian Revolution, and its impact on organized labour movements in Canada” <http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-part-2>



Between 1920 -1940, there were continual attempts on the part of the Canadian government to prevent undesirables of alien and impoverished nationalities from entering Canada. This includes the enactment of Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. This Act prohibited all Chinese immigrants except diplomats, students, children of Canadians and an investor class. In addition, there were series of Order in Council which includes among other things, Order in Council (P.C. 2115) excluding "any immigrant of any Asiatic race" except agriculturalists, farm labourers, female domestic servants, and wife and children of a person legal in Canada as well as Order in Council requiring Chinese and Japanese to relinquish their former citizenship before being naturalized. <http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-part-2>

By the 1940s, however, it appeared that the negative perceptions towards immigration started to change. Following the Second World War, Canada experienced extraordinary economic growth, which reduced anxiety over Canadian workers losing their jobs to cheap foreign labour. In order to sustain the economic transformation, egalitarian ideas such as the welfare state and multiculturalism began to take pre-eminence within Canadian society, and as a result, fostering greater toleration of different ethnic groups and increasing concerns over racial and religious intolerance. <http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-part-2>

Following through with this softened position, in 1947 the federal government removed the ban on Chinese immigrants. In 1951, the Senate Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour tabled a series of reports on federal immigration policy, urging the government to move away from its traditionally restrictive stance on immigration and to return to a more open door policy. These changes in social attitudes, however, were slow to manifest in immigration policy. In 1952, the federal government passed a new Immigration Act, which continued many of the

previous discriminatory practices. The new *Act* set out “preferred classes” of immigrants, including British subjects and citizens of France and the United States, and Asian immigrants who wished to reunite with immediate relatives in Canada. However the *Act* continued to discriminate against Asian immigrants without immediate relatives in Canada, gay persons, and persons with mental disabilities. In addition, the *Act* provided the federal government with the discretion to exclude or limit immigration of groups for social or economic reasons.

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-part-2>

Historically, Canadian immigration policy used race, ethnicity, nationality and color to determine the admissibility of immigrants such that immigrants from U.K., U.S.A., Western Europe and other parts of Europe were welcomed to Canada while visible minority immigrants were discouraged. After the Second World War, there was a shortage of trained professionals in western developed countries, including Canada (Li, 1992), which was having difficulties attracting foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades workers to supplement its shortages. Moreover, it was not possible to entice needed professional and skilled-trades workers from the U.S.A., U.K., or Europe, as these countries were also experiencing economic growth and labor shortages.

Politically, it was also not desirable for Canada to maintain explicit discriminatory immigration policies as Canada played an important role in the commonwealth and the United Nations. While there were a lot of discriminatory tendencies within the Canadian immigration ordinances as indicated above, the 1960s saw a number of key transformations to Canada’s immigration policy. Moreover, within Canada, the liberalism of the 1960s was an era of

decolonization and non-white countries were active in non-alignment movements, and were against exclusionary and racist immigration policies in the western world.

McIntyre (2001), Challinor (2011), and Troper (2013) establish that in 1962 the government tabled a set of laws practically eradicating racial discrimination as a key aspect of immigration policy. As such, potential immigrants could no longer be deprived of access to Canada on the basis of colour, race, or nationality. The Canadian Immigration Act 1962 change the emphasis in the immigration program, first introduced formally in the Immigration Act 1910, from the racially discriminatory criterion of country preference to admission of skilled immigrants and the reunion of families.

McIntyre (2001) further suggests that in 1966, the then Pearson government initiated a White Paper on immigration, acknowledging immigration as a major contributor to the national goals of population and economic growth. Nevertheless, to prevent high levels of unskilled immigration to Canada, the paper recommended a preference for immigrants with skills that would be valuable in the Canadian labour force. Under these circumstances, Canada decided to change its immigration policy in 1967 to adopt a point system based on education, age, specific vocational qualifications, experience, occupation, pre-arranged employment, knowledge of French or English, personal suitability and the destination of settlement in Canada (Basran, 1998). In addition, Troper (2013) indicates that the shift to an emphasis on skilled immigrants which emanated with the introduction of a Points System in 1967 was an attempt to remove all forms of discrimination and prejudice because of Canada's well-built role in diplomatic mediation and international peacekeeping.

That being said, this study would like to state before stressing further on the components of the points system that Immigrants to and within Canada are not homogeneous but rather heterogeneous in composition. Immigrants are admitted to Canada under various classes, namely: The Family class which comprises of immediate family members such as ones spouses, fiancés, dependent children, parents as well as grandparents. The Convention refugees class which is defined under the 1951 United Nations Convention as, “a class of individuals who have left their country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, group membership or political opinion” (Johnson 2006, p. 53) There is also the designated class which comprises of people in refugee-like circumstances, but these people do not fall within the category of the UN definition of a refugee, and then there are the independent or economic class, business immigrants (De Silva 1997). It is vital to note here that the various classes of immigrants mentioned falls within different processes of entry requirements. Within Canada, the family class, Convention refugees, and the designated class are admitted under humanitarian considerations, while, those who falls under the independent class are required to obtain the necessary number of points to pass a selection test. Subsequently, Oxana (2011) indicates that “immigrants who are selected according to the point system are likely to perform better economically than those who are accepted according to the humanitarian reasons.” (Oxana 2011, p.3)

Under the point system, Tolley Erin (2003) indicates that there were no quotas or restrictions on the number of people who could immigrate to Canada. Instead, prospective immigrants were required to pass a points test based on a number of qualities. Potential migrants were graded and given up to 100 points. Prospective applicants must obtain at least sixty-seven points out of a total of one hundred possible points on the selection framework.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2010), “If your score is the same or higher than the pass mark, then you may qualify to immigrate to Canada as a skilled worker. If your score is lower than the pass mark, you are not likely to qualify to immigrate to Canada as a skilled worker.” <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/apply-factors.asp>

And I would like to emphasize here that the period of the point system of the Canadian immigration policy is vital to the core arguments of this paper because it is the genesis of the contentions over the relationship between *migration-education*, and where *credential devaluation* become an issue that needs the attention of all concerned stakeholders. In this regards, the points were awarded according to the following six criteria.

**a) Education:**

Under the points system for the Skilled Worker Class, applicants are awarded points based on their level of education, up to a maximum of 25 points for a PhD or 23 points for Master’s degree with at least 17 years of fulltime study. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/factor-education.asp>; Ahmad 2013) Gozalie (2002) establish that education obtained pre-immigration will have a smaller effect on earnings than education obtained post-immigration; positive returns from education increase when the education is obtained in Canada. However, Gozalie (2002) further noted that “negative returns from education that immigrants experience may be diminished when immigrants are selected from “elite” countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy, which have labour market and education systems similar to Canada’s” (Gozalie 2002, p.21). Thus, immigrants from third world or developing countries, achieving earnings comparable to Canadian born counterparts is a significant challenge, whether they have been educated in Canada or not. A further challenge is the recognition of foreign credentials and education. Whether overtly, through outright non-

recognition, or covertly, through discrimination or underutilization, immigrants may find that foreign education and training are less valuable than comparable Canadian training and education, or that their education and training place them in significantly lower occupations than in their countries of origin (See Reitz, 2001). However, Hiebert (2002) notes that “while it is true that the education credentials of immigrants are frequently ignored in the Canadian labour market, participation rates and employment earnings rise steeply with higher levels of educational attainment” (Hiebert 2002, p.34). In other words, Tolley (2003) establish that, while immigrants with foreign education and training may fare worse than the Canadian born, they will fare better than immigrants with less education and training. According to this view, while the non-recognition of foreign credentials and education is problematic and constitutes a waste of knowledge and talents, those immigrants with education and training are nonetheless in a better place to succeed in the Canadian labour market than those without such credentials. However, it is contrary to the very goal of Canada’s immigration and multiculturalism policies – to welcome and integrate new Canadians – if we compare immigrants’ labour market performance only to that of other immigrants and not in relation to the performance of native-born Canadians with comparable education and experience.

Furthermore, Statistics Canada (2008) indicates that that despite the high levels of education of immigrants the problem of unemployment and underemployment has grown in recent years. (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2008112/pdf/10766-eng.pdf>) In the first quarter of 2011, the unemployment rate for native-born Canadians was 6.3 percent, compared to 9.1 percent for all immigrants and 14.2 percent for recent immigrants; 16.5 percent of immigrants were classified as “low income” for at least seven of their first ten years in the country; and all immigrants are more likely than native-born Canadians to be low income.

More so, even those immigrants who have lived in the country for ten years or more do not match the national average for earnings. (Challinor, 2011) In this regard, there is considerable concern about the ability of immigrants to quickly and easily convert their often high human capital and willingness to work into strong employment, earnings, and socioeconomic mobility

### ***b) Language proficiency***

Language proficiency is also a component criterion that is associated with the points system. Applicants are awarded up to a maximum of then 24 points but now 28 points based on their proficiency in Canada's two official languages. Up to 24 points are awarded for competency in a first language (English), and 4 are awarded for a second language (French) These points are determined according to Canadian language benchmark tests, which are administered by a designated language testing organization, and assess an applicant's ability to speak, listen, read and write. (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/factor-language.asp>; Ahmad 2013)

In lieu of testing, applicants may also choose to submit other evidence of their language proficiency. Research findings indicate that immigrants who arrive in Canada knowing an official language are more likely to succeed in the Canadian labour market. In a review of studies on the relationship between immigrant's second language acquisition and labour market performance, DeVoretz et al. (2000) found that "proficiency in one or both of Canada's official languages has a consistently positive effect on both immigrant earnings and employment opportunities" and, moreover, that "the rates of return from second language acquisition are large" (DeVoretz et al. 2000, p. 48). In addition, as Chiswick and Miller (2000) point out,

“Destination language proficiency can have indirect impacts on labor market earnings through the effect on the productivity of other forms of human capital [such as] schooling and labor market experience” (Chiswick and Miller 2000, p. 4). During consultations on the new Act, the Commissioner of Official Languages intervened to emphasize the importance of functional bilingualism, particularly for immigrants choosing to settle in official language minority communities. This intervention resulted in an increase in the number of points awarded for the second official language, from 4 to 8 (Quell, 2002). However, research has found that the relationship between language proficiency and annual earnings is not strictly linear. For example, Chiswick and Miller (2000), note that there are differences in earnings even among those immigrants who can conduct a conversation in an official language. Specifically, immigrants who can conduct a conversation in an official language and generally use an official language at home earn more than those immigrants who can conduct a conversation in an official language, but generally use a non-official language at home (Chiswick and Miller 2000, p.7). Still, most researchers support a selection system based primarily on official language proficiency as it is agreed that this is the single best predictor of future economic success in Canada. By setting the pass mark then at 75 points and now at 67, the selection criteria for the Skilled Worker Class virtually excludes those applicants with limited or no proficiency in an official language (see Hiebert, 2002; Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012). Nonetheless, Pendakur and Pendakur (1996) have shown that knowledge of an official language is not always a guarantee of economic parity. Their research indicates that “knowledge of minority languages is correlated with lower earnings for men and women in Canada’s three largest cities [Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver]” even when knowledge of an official language is held constant (Pendakur and Pendakur 1996, p.16). In other words, immigrants who speak both an official and



a non-official language tend to earn less than those who speak only an official language, although this negative return diminishes as the local linguistic population grows. Pendakur and Pendakur (1996) argue that the negative return on non-official language proficiency is a result of discrimination in the labour market, which may be based on culture as much as on colour, and that large enclaves of linguistic groups may minimize this discrimination by sensitizing the population to accent and other cultural artifacts.

Subsequently, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2012) indicates that Canadian and international research had “consistently shown that language proficiency is the single most important factor in gaining better rates of employment, appropriate employment and higher earnings.” As a result, language ability is now the most important factor on the grid, representing a total of up to 28 points in recognition of its critical importance in ensuring successful outcomes.”

(<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/departement/media/backgrounders/2012/2012-12-19.asp>)

### ***c) Employment experience***

With regards to employment experience, applicants are awarded points based on labour market experience, up to a maximum of 21 points for four or more years of experience. For each year less than four, two points are deducted. The minimum number of fifteen points can be earned through one year of qualifying experience. (Ahmad 2013; <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/factor-experience.asp>) The relationship between experience and potential earnings exhibits many of the characteristics present in the relationship between education and potential earnings. Gozalie (2002) points out that while experience from source countries with labour market systems similar to Canada’s pays a higher return than experience from other

countries, returns on post-immigration experience are greater than those for pre-immigration experience. Employers in Canada may not recognize experience attained abroad, or may value it less than Canadian experience. However, Chiswick and Miller (2000) argue that “experience acquired abroad can be more profitably transformed into higher earnings where the immigrant has shifted fully to the use of an official language in everyday life in Canada. Where an immigrant cannot conduct a conversation in an official language, pre-immigration experience, like educational attainment, is not associated with higher earnings.” (Chiswick and Miller 2000, p.11) Once again, this demonstrates the centrality of official language proficiency to labour market success.

#### *d) Age*

According to the criterion of age, applicants between the ages of 21 and 49 are awarded a maximum of 10 points. Other applicants incur a penalty of 2 points for each year above or below this range. (Ahmad 2013; <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/factor-age.asp>) Although doubtless most researchers would agree that immigrants in their “working years” are most able to contribute to the Canadian economy, there may be some disagreement over the age range outlined in the selection criteria and what precisely constitutes one’s “working years.” Research by Joseph Schaafsma and Arthur Sweetman (1999) indicates that “age at immigration matters” because younger immigrants are more likely than older immigrants to receive education and acquire experience in Canada and are thus less susceptible to the devaluation that research suggests older immigrants’ experience. They also note that younger immigrants may acculturate more easily than older immigrants and suggest, as well, that younger immigrants are often highly motivated, which leads them to outperform other immigrants and, in some cases, the native born. Schaafsma and Sweetman’s research suggests that immigrants who settled in Canada before the

age of 10 experience the lowest earnings differential of all immigrants. Among visible minority immigrants, those who immigrated before the age of 10 do not experience a reduction in earnings relative to other immigrants, but visible minority immigrants who arrive later in life do. In a more related development, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2012) notes that recent studies indicate that, “younger immigrants integrate more rapidly into the labour market and spend a greater number of years contributing to Canada’s economy. The revised selection grid awards younger immigrants with a maximum of 12 points up to age 35, “with diminishing points awarded from 35 to age 46. There will be no points awarded after age 46. However, “workers aged 47 or older will continue to be eligible for the Program.”

(<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/departement/media/backgrounders/2012/2012-12-19.asp>)

***e) Arranged Employment:***

Under arranged employment, a maximum of 10 points is awarded to applicants who have a permanent job offer that has been confirmed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/factor-employment.asp>) Although research on the relationship between arranged employment and labour market success is scant, Gozalie (2002) has argued that some immigrants may be disadvantaged in the *Canadian labour market*, particularly in the period immediately following their arrival, because they lack the networks and knowledge about local conditions that would facilitate employment placement (Gozalie 2002. p.6). Arranged employment, which may mitigate a newcomer’s need for networks and other connections to obtain employment, therefore is likely a predictor of potential success in the Canadian labour market.

### *f) Adaptability*

With respect to adaptability, Tolley (2003) points out that a maximum of 10 points is awarded based on an applicant's adaptability, which includes: the education of the spouse of the principal applicants; previous work or study in Canada by either the principle applicant or the spouse; a family relationship in Canada; and a maximum of 5 points based on those points received under the arranged employment criteria. This approach, Tolley further emphasize, replaces the "personal suitability" factor that was previously used and, it is believed, is a more objective means of assessing an applicant's potential adaptability to Canada. Here, principle applicants are awarded additional ten points according to an assessment of the spouse's education, previous work in Canada and family relations in Canada.

(<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/factor-adaptability.asp>) It is believed that spouses with higher levels of education will be capable of entering the labour force and augmenting the family's contribution to the economy. The gender-based analysis of Bill C-11 noted that recognition of the spouse's education would "have positive gender impacts" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002).

Intended applicants to Canada under the points system must and should meet the above criteria, if they are to be considered admissible to Canada. Ever since the introduction of the points system in 1967, Canada has sought to target its immigration benefits toward potential immigrants with characteristics that coincide with Canada's evolving needs and interests.

When the point system was introduced in 1967, Canadian immigration policy took a quick turn in its immigrant entry standard in that applicants for immigration did not have to be

evaluated based on their country of origin but on the basis of their potential contribution to the Canadian economy or the presence of a family member in Canada.

The Canadian Immigration Act 1967 introduced two immigrant categories namely, sponsored and independent programs. Under the sponsorship program, a close family relationship with a Canadian citizen or resident could qualify a potential immigrant to gain admission to Canada. In addition, immigrants' under the sponsorship program were divided into two subcategories namely; the family class and nominated relatives (referred as assisted relatives since 1978). The family class includes close relatives and finances entering Canada based on personal ties to Canadians. Immigrants under this category were not assessed under the point system.

The nominated-relatives category includes distant relatives who are assessed under the point system but are given a bonus based on their relationship with a Canadian sponsor. Under this category, applications for immigration were to be assessed according to the applicant's potential labor market performance in Canada. The criteria for assessment were based on points assigned to such characteristics as age, educational, employment arrangements, knowledge of English and French, and occupational demands. According to Bruce (1995), the enumerated changes in the Canadian Immigration Act 1967 caused the source country component of annual immigrant inflows to change sharply from predominantly European countries to the Third World countries of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and South and Central America.

Since then, a series of Immigration Acts placed greater importance on human rights and humanitarian issues. In view of this fact, there has been a steady rise in the proportions of family and refugee class immigrants in the annual immigrant inflows to Canada. This led to discourse

in the academic and political circles that immigrants admitted under family and refugee class were not evaluated according to their potential in labor market performance in Canada. The immigrants were assumed to lack the skills and education necessary to adjust to the Canadian job market. Directly and indirectly, the immigrants were held responsible for the overall decline in economic returns from immigration (DeVoretz, 1995).

In 1974, the Canadian government made the rules for skills selection stricter in that independent applicants must be evaluated under Occupational Demand and failure to score points under this meant an automatic rejection of the application. Also, applicants without prearranged employment received a 10-point penalty.

In 1976, the Canadian immigration history saw the enactment of the Immigration Act 1976 that came into force in 1978. The Act permits Canada to bring in a large number of refugees each year rather than during world disasters. Green and Green (1995) note that this policy had a potential for negatively affecting the proportion of assessed immigrants in an inflow. The post-1978 regulations eased entry requirements under family class by awarding a 15-point subsidy for the mere presence of relatives in Canada. The setting of the levels of family class and refugee immigrants remained independent of the needs of Canadian labor markets (Hawkins, 1991).

The 1976 Immigration Act that formed the laws we follow today was intended to promote Canada's demographic, economic, cultural and social goals. This new Act encouraged family reunification and attempted to fulfill the 1951 Canada's international obligation with the UN (Challinor, 2011). This Act was non-discriminatory in its policy and required cooperation between all levels of government. Thus, the federal government had to consult with the

provinces regarding planning and management of Canadian immigration. Within the realms of this act, there are four basic categories for landed immigrants in Canada. The first classification is family; second, humanitarian, including refugees, persecuted or displaced persons; third, independents that followed their own initiative to immigrate to Canada; and finally, assisted relatives.

The 1976 Act, which emphasized family reunification and humanitarian concerns over economic interests, was replaced in 2001 with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), a policy that stresses education, language, and adaptability. With the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Act in 2001, new classes and procedures were created in order to further Canada's goal of building human capital. Highly educated immigrants typically gain entry through the economic class, which now makes up more than 60 percent of all admitted immigrants (Challinor, 2011; Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), 2012). From 2001 up till now, Canada has engaged in a series of immigration policy modifications as well as transformation to accommodate for changing economic/demographic composition within the country. Basically, Canada as indicated in recent studies, welcomes about 250,000 permanent residents from all categories each year. (See CIC, 2012)

#### ***4.3: Canadian Immigration Policy in the Post-Industrial Era***

More recently, as Canada moved toward a post-industrial service economy, or the 'knowledge economy,' immigration has emphasized labour demand for skilled work, as reflected in the 1967 introduction of the 'points system' for selecting immigrants on the basis of education and occupational skills. Since 1967, the points system has evolved in the direction of ever-higher levels of skill and a greater emphasis on education, especially post-secondary education,

as opposed to specific occupational skills in various trades. Simmons (2010) stressed that the educational systems in Canada have responded to the changing economy, with increase in the education and training of the workforce. In both instances, policy changes have reflected the evolution of the country's economic focus – from agricultural to industrial to post-industrial

The post-industrial economy of the 21st century cut across what Ritzer (1998) described as forces of “professionalization” at the increasing side of the scale, and the forces of “McDonaldization” at the decreasing side of the scale. While this might sound like a shift from the old industrial society based on unskilled jobs to the present-day society based on a progressively more skilled labour force, in actuality both developments are ineradicable characteristics of post-industrialism.

In the late-twentieth century there was a hypothetical shift in advanced Western economies from an economic system based primarily on the manufacture of physical goods (cars, television sets, refrigerators) to an economic system based on “knowledge goods” (computer software, global media and telecommunications information systems, virtual financial and other cyberspace markets, etc.) at one end, and on “personal services” (fast-food restaurants, for example) at the other. The knowledge-based economic sector in the primary labour market tends to be associated with relatively high-status, well-paid occupations requiring high levels of education and training. While the service sector in the secondary labour market tends to be associated with low-status, low-paying and dead-end work. Satzewich and Wong (2003) concurred that the present-day migration surges in Canada not only entails the legitimate movement of highly skilled professionals and technical workers who occupy well-paying and generally attractive employment; they also entail the movement of an uneducated workforce who fill unattractive, low-paying works that are difficult to occupy with domestic labour.



As Satzewich and Wong (2003) note, “While the phenomenon of ‘runaway shops’ has moved many industrial production sites to places where cheap labour is located, there are now large movements of professional, skilled, and unskilled labour into industrialized, developed countries such as Canada, the United States, and many other European countries.” (Satzewich and Wong (2003, p. 365). So, while the older “Marxian reserve-army thesis”, as indicated by Forster (2006), revolves mostly around unskilled or semiskilled workers, in contemporary society it encompasses also of highly skilled and technical workers. This inclination toward a two-way economic structure denotes what many writers like Bell 1973; Hage and Powers 1992; Esping-Anderson 1993; Clement and Myles 1994 referred to as a “post-industrial” political-economic order with a segmented labour market.

Nowadays, one of the most remarkable characteristics of modern-day skilled and unskilled migration movement to post-industrial Canada is their ethno racial multiplicity. The Global North, primarily the United States and Europe, at the moment supplies Canada with less than 30 percent of all immigrants in any given year, with the balance coming from the Global South – Asia, the Caribbean, South and Central America, and Africa. Basically all highly-developed countries in the Western World have experienced comparatively large-scale immigration since the mid-twentieth century. In the process of evaluating these countries, Castles and Miller (1993) notes the following common characteristics: (1) a dynamic process of migration, which transforms the temporary entry of workers and refugees into permanent settlers who form distinct ethnic groups; (2) economic and social marginalization of the immigrants; (3) community formation among immigrants; (4) increasing interaction between immigrant groups and the local population; and (5) the imperative for the state to react to immigration and ethnic diversity (Castles and Kosack 1984). In this connection, the 2001 Census of Canada spells out

hundreds of ethnic groups defined by their historical lineage. There are now large movements of multicultural and multi-coloured migrants from the Global South into post industrialized countries such as Canada, the United States and many European countries in the North; thereby changing and transforming the universal territorial design, and challenging nation-states to address diversity issues related to political and economic accommodation (Foster, 1998).

Another significant characteristic linked to the global migration age in most post-industrial countries, including Canada, has been the general increase in the significance of higher education access to employment prospects across a wide variety of occupations (Hunter 1988; Hunter and Leiper 1993; Baer 2004). The shifting position of education and credentials in the employment markets has been branded, according to Reitz (2003), as a “knowledge economy,” and is reflected in a variety of institutional growth, including change in the organizational role of personnel and its professionalization of the form of human resource management, changing relations between corporations and educational institutions in employee recruitment for certain critical occupation, rapid expansion of education institutions themselves, and the development of professional schools oriented toward the needs of local labour markets through increased control over the professions” (Reitz 2003, p. 5).

Despite the fact that a lot of people in Canada's knowledge economy consider the acquisition of jobs and social eminence in the knowledge economy a manifestation of individual aptitude and hard work (that is, a “merit system”), the fact is they logically overstate the degree to which people takes charge of their destinies. For example, Reitz (2003) outlined the institutional and job-related modification linked with the surfacing of today's knowledge economy and flexible labour force, and contended that the attendant arrival of gifted, trained, untrained as well as half-trained workers to Canada can be examined in terms of three different

consortia: regulated or licensed professions (like medicine), managerial occupations, and occupations where employees now have university degrees. Reitz, while using census sample data for immigrants arriving between 1970 and 1996, examined the variation involving professional, managerial and other occupations in the immigrant proficiency evaluation procedure in Canada. He discovered that eventually, regardless of the rise in educational requirements and professional ethics in numerous occupations, immigrants seem to come across increased skill reduction. While immigrant education and proficiency are repeatedly devalued in specialized fields, the scope of such reduction is in reality higher in the organization of the evolving knowledge-based industries as well as in lower-levels skill jobs. This appears to signify that the non-recognition of immigrant credentials in our progressively knowledge-based economy is not only an existing place of work dysfunction, but also an increase in the downward shift in the labour force (Foster, 2006).

Here, the encouragement of *meritocracy* in an education-based economy from human capital perspective should generate concerns toward a more productive as well as a suitable evaluation of all credentials, including the foreign-acquired credentials of immigrants. Foster (2006) further stress that within the economic level, human capital theory emphasizes that, where education-based skills impinge on output, employers are under reasonable anxiety to search for the most highly knowledgeable skilled workers, and to ignore individual features that are not related to organizational output, such as gender, birthplace, ethnic origin and race. Subsequently, the brunt of any prejudice or intolerance against immigrants, and most especially racial minority immigrants, would not inevitably be eradicated by such competitive pressures, but would likely reduce considerably. In addition, he emphasize that at the institutional level, an organized system of hiring and promotion processes relating to an objective knowledge-based standard for

accomplishment could protect against unreasonable and potentially inequitable practice. This would protect against unjustified and illogical recognition of the significance of foreign credentials, and guarantee reasonable and unbiased workplace hiring processes that is based on achievement.

On the other hand, despite the common idea in everyday life that present-day Canada is a society where anyone can get a good job and get ahead if only she or he tries hard enough, research evidence has indicated that one distinctive sociological characteristics of Canada is that it has traditionally been exceedingly stratified along ascribed rather than achieved lines (Foster, 2006). This stemmed from the fact that Canada is an orderly arranged society of ascribed bloc status that is stuck between unequal opportunity and cultural democracy; it is a society where the relationships between the many cultures are engulfed by struggles of class and power. In his 1965 seminal study of “The Vertical Mosaic” John Porter, as cited by Foster 2006, p. 292), notes that:

“In a society which is made up of many cultural groups there is usually some relationship between a person’s membership in these groups and his class position and, consequently, his chances of reaching positions of power. Because the Canadian people are often referred to as a mosaic composed of different ethnic groups, the title, “The Vertical Mosaic,” was originally given to the chapter which examines the relationship between ethnicity and social class. As the study proceeded, however, the hierarchical relationship between Canada’s many cultural groups became recurring theme in class and power. For example, it became clear that the Canadians of British origin have retained, within the elite structure of the society, the charter group status with which they started out, and that in some institutional settings the French have been admitted as a co-charter group whereas in others they have not” (Porter, 1965: xii-xiii)

Porter's earlier position, now further stressed by Foster (2006), reveals that Canadian society comprised of a disproportionate cultural opportunity that was deep-rooted in a disproportionate division of treasured assets. While the position of Porter seems to be in contestation by some researchers on one hand, on the other hand some researchers seem to

concur with Porter's position. For example, Ali & Grabb (1998) "contend that members of some ethnic groups often fare much better than people from other ethnic groups in the pursuit of important advantages and privileges in the society" (Ali & Grabb, 1998, p. 4) Other scholars (Agocs & Boyd, 1993; Pendakur & Pendakur, 1995) correspondingly affirmed that minorities are "subject to economic exploitation in the form of a job ceiling, to residential segregation, inferior education, and to political manipulation and exclusion" (Ogbu, 1987, p. 269).

It has been suggested more lately, that the cultural group differences that Porter came across have diminished continuously first in education, then in occupation over the last number of years in Canada. For example, Herberg (1990) indicates that "The existing ethnic income disparity, as a continuing indication of the charter-group-legitimate ethnic elitism that once drove Canadian society in all socioeconomic elements, is believed to be similar to those in education and occupation that has declined over time" (Herberg 1990, p.218). In other development, Tepperman (1975) and Darroch (1979) indicates that prior studies reveal that any advantageous position that the charter groups may have had in the past in the work-related arena has in actual fact been disputed by other European ethnic groups. The societal inference at this juncture is that in our 21st century post-industrial and multi-national globe, basic arguments of cultural characteristics as an obstacle to social mobility must, in the opinion of Isajiw, Sever, and Driedger (1993), be discarded for the reason that the fundamental connection between cultural identity and social mobility is insignificant and not credible. While the recurring idea of unequal representation and recognition within Canadian society's has transformed, it is nevertheless essential to take hold of the fact that the sociological intention has not changed since Porter first initiated the "ethnically blocked mobility thesis" (Hou and Balakrishnan 1996) – that is, to

scrutinize a structure of opportunity in which privileged work-related positions are conserved, or have a propensity to be set aside, for particular social groups.

As a prelude to unloading the recurring argument(s) of modern-day multi-national and post-industrial civilization, quite a number of sociologists have hypothesized “the discrimination thesis” (Hou and Balakrishnan (1996), which attributes the lower position that exist in our society nowadays for some visible minority groups to the biases that are imbedded within the socio-economic structure of the society. In the opinion of Feagin and Feagin (1998), discrimination is the behaviour or traditions of dominant-group members that have a detrimental repercussion on members of minority groups. Li (1988) and Reitz (1990), in their contribution, stressed that in the face of higher educational levels and occupational attainment of immigrants, visibility and social distance manifest themselves in income inequality, which impacts the degree and speed of integration into Canadian society. This has been, and continues to be, the recurring theme within Canadian society when it comes to people considered to be “Others”. It can therefore be argued that visibility has replaced cultural group status as a recurring theme; where discrimination and differential rewards in the hierarchical structure of power and class continues to be a major concern in all walks of life within Canadian society. This stemmed from the fact that the perception of the so-call dominant groups within Canadian society toward immigrants has been and continue to be on the premise of negative misrepresentation. They see immigrants as “other” people and their worth or contributions are not fully recognized or acknowledged. Hence negative perception about immigrants and what they represent are easily developed mostly by the dominant group within Canadian society.

#### ***4.4: Anglo-Canadian Attitudes towards Immigrants***

Historically, the attitudes of the Anglo-Canadian towards the in-flow of immigrants from other parts of Europe during the 19th and early 20th century were compounded in consistent negativity and hostility. Donald Avery (1995) indicates that some Canadian newspapers, like the Toronto Mail and the Empire, overtly expressed in their publications their dissatisfaction in relation with the Canadian government's open door policy on the importation of foreign laborers. Most of the then Canadian newspaper saw the intake of foreign labourers by the Canadian government as "an attempt to make North-West a sort of anthropological garden to pick up the waifs and strays of Europe...the freak of creation" (Donald Avery 1995, p. 61). These negative and derogatory representations were the same everywhere within the country, because the in-flow of foreign immigrants other than from Britain was considered a threat to the Anglo-Canadian base. The underlying intention on the part of the Anglo-Canadian was to make foreign immigrants look bad in the eyes of the government so as to discourage their in-flow in order to solidify their cultural supremacy. As an effort to addressing some of the concerns of the Anglo-Canadian base, the then Canadian government introduces the head tax on the Chinese in order to force the Chinese into contributing into the Canadian economy rather than remitting all of their money back to china. In addition, the 'continuous journey' criteria was applied to immigrants mostly from several Asian and African countries knowing fully-well that there were no ships plying directly between those continents and Canada. More so, black immigrants from the Caribbean were excluded based on the impression/conception that the Canadian winter would be too harsh on them.

In fact, the Eurocentrism of immigration was possibly best characterized and made renowned by Sir Clifford Sifton who, as Minister of Interior in charge for lands administration

and immigration from 1896 well into the twentieth century, expressed himself thus — "When I speak of quality ... [immigrants] ... I think a stalwart peasant in a sheep-skin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers had been farmers for generations, with a stout wife and half-a-dozen children ..." (Dafoe 1931, p. 319). Sir Clifford's words reflected the trouble-free focus in early immigration policy on racial homogeny. From the very first Canadian Immigration Act of 1869 through to the late twentieth century, the flow of what state officials deemed to be "desirable" immigrants from "preferred countries" was mainly made up of primarily of white people from Britain, Europe and the United States. Even after the Second World War, Li (1996) notes that, "between 1954 and 1967 about 83 percent of immigrants who came to Canada were from Europe while only 4 percent were from Asia, and 1 percent was from Africa." (Li 1996, p.106)

While Canadian society has evolved over time, the mind-set to maintain that cultural supremacy still resonates within the domain of the mainstream stakeholders. Hence, the devaluation of professional immigrants' credentials based on lower standard and quality, lack of language proficiency as well as the lack of Canadian experience in one way or the other reinforces the preservation of the cultural status quo. Since the 1960s, following the introduction of the "universality" of immigration policy (unofficially by the Progressive Conservative government in 1962 and officially by the Liberals in 1967); series of research studies have recognized increases in the demographics and frequency of migration flows around the world, analyzed the changing dynamics that shape immigration policies, as well as recognized the growing complexity of contemporary immigration flows.

In post-industrial societies like Canada, there is a supposed indication that the connection amid dominant and sub-dominant groups does not usually go beyond different ethno-racial associations in a way that supports institutional specialty across the institutional scale of society.



On the other hand, everyday life in today's Canadian society does not replicate, according to Foster (2006), a "back of the bus" formal segregation and hierarchy, and there are no public spaces designated for "Whites only" or "Coloured only" (Foster 2006, p. 293). He further emphasizes that this image within various societal institutions gives the existence of different groups within our present day society a non-caste-like public reflection in which, the social order seems as if it is not opposed to transformation or to the social mobility of minority groups. As an alternative, visible minority transition from accommodation to integration into the mainstream seems to be presented as a clear-cut "first come, first serve queue" and "point system" proposal that emphasized individual merit and individual inventiveness. Nevertheless, the variability of the arena of social institutions does not automatically match up with the political economy. Here the degree of racial supremacy and inequity in the workplace is often covered over and concealed by the casualness of modest policies and conventions that are tied into the structure of economic institutions, and operate to limit or bar minorities from material rewards and privileges.

#### ***4.5: Summary Statement of Chapter1***

As has been said, Canadian immigration policy is a paradigm of a political economic organization that exposes explicit ethno-racial prejudice and favouritism. Like several other societal problems, racialized immigration indicates an inconsistency between the principles and genuineness of Canadian society at present. Despite the fact that fairness of opportunity and autonomy for all irrespective of country of origin, body colour, creed, or language are known principles and morals of this country; many less-ranked minority group members nonetheless face prejudice on the foundation of racializing causes, regardless of their status. So, although the passage of employment equity legislation, human rights legislation, official promotion of

multiculturalism, and the introduction of “universality” in Canada's immigration system are directed at eradicating blatant institutional biases in and by Canadian society, often people of colour, and predominantly visible immigrants, are forced to take up dwelling and stay on the margin of the economic centres of society (Foster 2002). Consequently, in the modern-day workplace, while there are variations in terms of income levels among visible minority groups research has time and again established that wages shortcomings are enormous for immigrants from non-European backgrounds (Reitz and Sklar, 1997).

In the end, body colour though concealed by the naturalization and normalization of White privilege, is the starting place of the first dialectical anxiety of the present-day post-industrial political economy. Here, prejudice and inequity exist in institutional settings fashioned by White people for White people and based on White people's experiences on one hand. On the other hand corporate institutional formations and traditions neglect and rarely recognize the value systems of people of colour, their styles of interacting, or the complexity in their lives. Here, mainstream establishments are crafted by the dominant group either purposely or unintentionally and stabilizes dominant ideals, priority, programs, and traditions as better-quality, indispensable or predestined (Fleras and Elliott 1999). As a result, some institutions or individuals may be in command of and limit rights or access to resources for certain minority groups by deliberately or otherwise imposing sets of unfair entry restrictions (Foster, 2006).

Today, the goal of the immigration system is to encourage youthful, bilingual, high-skill immigration in order to build human capital within Canada's aging labor force. In order to attract the right type of migrants, Canada has set in place certain education and skills provisions that work to the advantage of potential migrants who have work experience, higher education, and

English or French language abilities. But issues relating to the questions of fairness have been raised given that there appear to be workforce barriers, such as credential recognition and strong demand for sophisticated language and literacy competency, which impede access to skilled employment and social mobility among some newcomers (Challinor, 2011). Mounting evidence also shows the systemic barriers in the labor market and an inability among many recent highly skilled newcomers to find employment that is commensurate with their education and experience, result in a significant amount of brain waste. The apparent variance between the skills and education levels of economic-class migrants and labor market performance in Canada is a concern that highlights both integration challenges in the post-industrial economy and a sharp division between immigration policy intent and outcomes.

Canada has one of the utmost net immigration rates in the world, accepting more migrants per capita than other western or developed countries. This tendency is expected to remain a fixture of Canadian immigration policy and demography for the anticipated future; so too is the prominence on human capital, as immigration becomes ever more compactly entwined into economic policy. Therefore, the patterns of social and economic inclusion of immigrants will possible remains a challenge for a more and more diverse Canadian society. And to ensure a continued vitality of Canada's economy in the years to come, Challinor, (2011) suggest that there is the need for an immigration strategy that focus on attracting and integrating skilled immigrants into the workforce. But research evidence reveals that there are still structural and personal constrains affecting the assimilation as well as the integration processes of foreign professional immigrants into the Canadian work force.

## ***5. Chapter (2): Devaluation of Immigrants' Educational Credentials: Structural/Individual Barriers:***

Following through with the above argument, results from accessible researches reveals that the different levels of barriers that skilled immigrants come across within the Canadian labour force; tend to serve as a discouraging force against the proper recognition and utilization of their professional as well as their educational skills. The subject of impartiality and unbiased practice in the modern Canadian place of work has a built-in overlap with the problem of the appropriate valuation and acknowledgment of immigrants' foreign-acquired credentials. Foreign credentials obstacles (or “credentialism” in an immigration perspective), according to Foster (2006), can be defined as people not being able to get work for occupations they are qualified to the same extent as the natural born. Nonetheless, a broader knowledge of foreign skills recognition as a social problem requires a focus on both a structural and individual interconnectedness. As stated by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Employment Systems Review - a Guide for the Federal Public Service*, cited by Foster 2006, p. 284:

“Credentials barriers (credentialism) may be found in educational requirements that are constrained by a practice of considering only "recognized" educational institutions, or that do not recognize knowledge and skills acquired through means other than formal education. Credentialism, often unjustly excludes visible minorities from the candidate pool” ([http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/index\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/index_e.asp) 1999-02-01).

While the realities may not be in contestation, the justifications for credentials devaluation and skills discounting are still strongly challenged (Basran and Zong, 1998). The most important discussions in current sociological work done on Canadian workplace environment revolves around the degree to which individual factors or structural factors

contribute to the social problem of assimilation/integration in relation to immigrant' skills. An evaluation of collective facts indicated that, in the 1960s, immigration policy reforms eliminated preferences for immigrants of European origin and implemented a points-based system for economic immigrants as a strategy to ensure quality-control for maximum employability in an economy where skilled labor was becoming a priority. As we discussed in one of the sections above, the point system allowed immigrants to be chosen on the basis of suitability to Canada and the Canadian labor market needs, and to apparently work against any prejudice owing to religion, race, or country of origin (Foster 1998, p.72-74). Immigrants gained points on such individual factors as occupational attainment or skills, educational level, knowledge of English or French and age. Consequently, the source countries of immigrants became more diversified even while admission requirements became more refined around value-added economic criteria.

Though times have changed, Statistics Canada's (2003) release of the demographic trends from the 2001 census confirmed that visible minorities then made up 13.4 per cent of Canada's population. The statistics further stipulates that 58 per cent of the immigrants arriving in Canada prior to the 1996 census came from Asia, 20 per cent from Europe, 11 per cent from the Caribbean, Central and South America, 8 per cent from Africa and 3 per cent from the United States. Chinese people are now Canada's largest visible minority group, with a population of more than one million. Chinese now make up 3.5 per cent of Canada's population, followed by those of South Asian origin (3 per cent) and Black (2.2 per cent). Up to twenty years ago, minorities made up less than 5 per cent of the population, but demographic prognoses indicate that a greater percentage of Canada's population would soon be foreign-born. Underlying this contemporary social context are questions arising from the interrelation between immigration issues and increasing ethno-cultural and racial diversity. So, while reviews often deal with

foreign-trained professional immigrants in general de-racializing dialogue, it can be noted that visible minority foreign-trained professionals have distinctive cultural backgrounds and experiences that differs from White foreign-trained professionals, and may tend to be more disadvantaged even in a contemporary labour market in which education-based skills are emphasized and meritocratic practices are promoted.

In this connection, sociological enquiries have clearly recognized the “social fact” that current migration to Canada in its connection to the political economy is both transformative and ethnically divided. That is, a large number of foreign-trained professional immigrants who because of their ethnic background have experienced downward social mobility after immigrating to urban Canada, and that the significant human capital brought in by immigrants has been underutilized. Furthermore, it is also a well-established social fact that at the heart of this dynamic, the economic returns to human capital in relation to education and labour market experience appeared to be lower for immigrants who belong to visible minorities, than for White ethnic immigrants or native-born Canadians (Baker and Benjamin 1994). Richmond (1984, p.253) for example, found that “despite the high levels of education, visible minority immigrants from Third World countries appear to be particularly vulnerable in the Canadian urban labour market”. These existing social facts are not in dispute: immigrant skills are significantly discounted in urban Canada, and the groups affected mostly are primarily composed of racial minorities (Reitz, 2005). Now the question we need to ask here is what are the possible reasons why foreign trained professionals’ credentials are discounted in Canada?

Thus far, discussions with regard to the motives behind credentials devaluation and skills discounting, as noted by Basran and Zong (1998), have drawn the attention of several academic studies. These discussions are structured around the issue of whether structural and

institutionalized dynamics are predominantly blameable for immigrants' occupational disadvantages, or whether it may be attributable to individual responsibility. A focus on individual factors in determining occupational disadvantage looks at differences in “*achieved*” social and economic characteristics, acquired through personal attributes and efforts. For example, some research studies have highlighted the emphasis on individual features, such as lacking Canadian experience and inadequate command of English as major occupational limitations for immigrant professionals (Ornstein and Sharma, 1983; Basavarajappa and Verma, 1985).

In addition, a focus on structural and institutional factors in determining occupational disadvantage, to reiterate, tends to look at differences in “*ascribed*” status of individuals, such as differences attributed to cultural backgrounds and compositions. In other more structurally focused studies, barriers are depicted as institutions failing to recognize credentials of foreign-trained professionals, and professional organizations acting as gatekeepers to disadvantage professional immigrants. These studies suggest that control of entry to the professions has caused systematic exclusion and occupational disadvantages for professional immigrants (Boyd, 1985; Trovato and Grindstaff, 1986; McDade, 1987; Ralston, 1988; Beach and Worswick, 1989; Rajagopal, 1990; Kraun et al. 2000). Hence, the most difficult problem for modern research is as follows: Given that there are occupational disadvantages for immigrants that cut across colour lines, is it primarily the result of the structural and institutional resistance in society, or is it primarily the result of more complex demographic or motivational factors? More so, in a modern culture where accomplishment and excellence revolves in most cases around education-based abilities, how do we account for job-related deficiency across demographic lines?

While some research studies suggest the fact that racial minorities' experience of greater problems of skill underutilization is not an accurate or a straightforward substantiation of ethnic discernment. However, Boyd (1992), among other researchers, contends that in the setting of a varied multi-ethnic and interracial society, the influences of supporting arguments on wages disparity for the most part are problematic; thus, without careful controls of demographic and motivational influences structural factors such as discrimination, ethnicity and race may be overstated in assessments of wages variation. Different rates of job-related return may relate more to personal qualifications than to blocked mobility. In this regard, Boyd (1992) further argued that multivariate analysis is essential in adjusting to the effects of other influential factors, such as schooling, age, sex, nativity, language, occupation, and labour-force activity. From an individual factor approach, without giving adequate attention to such demographic and motivational factors as age at immigration, period of immigration, official language proficiency and so on, it is suggested that there can be a propensity to misread discrimination, and therefore, offer inadequate solutions.

One general finding in the literature is that after careful revision of various factors that affect earnings, including years of education and labour market experience, new immigrants appeared to start at a significant disadvantaged position when compared to native-born Canadians when they enter the country, but then catch up over time. Practically all ethnic groups have experienced overall improvement in educational attainment over the last three decades and generations; hence the relative differences among ethnic groups have narrowed (Herberg 1990; Shamai, 1992). The implication here is that at some point in the individual experiential process the immigrant gap is, or could be, fully eliminated. The expectation of better prospects for the second generation is based, in part, on the importance attached to education by highly educated



immigrants, which they possibly pass on to their children. Also, Boyd (1992) emphasized that business owners and organizations are more prone to accepting this second generation, because their education, unlike that of their parents, will have been obtained in Canada. Preceding studies on the children of immigrants by and large corroborate this possibility (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC),2012) However, in the most recent work there seems to be general agreement that for non-White immigrants who have arrived in Canada since the 1980s, the initial earnings gap has widened and the catch-up rate has slowed down (Baker and Benjamin 1994), and visible minority professionals may find it difficult to obtain Canadian accreditation for the professional standing they held in their country of origin. Black men of Caribbean origin, for example, seem to carry a long-term disadvantage and may never reach the wage level that one might expect (Simmons and Plaza, 1995).

One group of researchers found evidence that minorities who have at least one degree from Canada and one from abroad have a very significant income premium, even when compared to White immigrants with the same mix of credentials (Alboim, Finnie and Ming 2005). Further, the research argues that, minority immigrants with multiple degrees do exceptionally well compared to immigrants of colour with only a foreign degree, on one hand. On the other hand, white educated immigrants earn equal and reasonable returns for their schooling. There is equally very slight variation, the research stress, among White and visible minority immigrants who acquire their university degrees in Canada. In addition, they further indicates that there is equally slight disparity in the educational returns of White and non-White native-born Canadians (Alboim, et al. 2005).

The question that we need to be concerned with is to know what inference the researchers deduce from the outcome of the research findings. First, conclusive research evidence reveals

that a foreign degree held by an immigrant who falls into the category of a visible minority group is profoundly non-recognized within the Canadian labour market, which is in line with the sociological research consensus findings. However, the evidence went further to suggest that there is little difference in the significant returns of degrees obtained in Canada on the part of immigrants of colour and White immigrants (the returns are actually estimated to be slightly greater for people of colour) and that native-born members of visible minority groups holding degrees do about as well (again, actually a little higher) as their White cohorts. From this, the researchers conclude that direct racial discrimination seems unlikely to be the reason — or at least the sole reason — for this gap. That been said, the researchers cannot say why non-white immigrants with foreign degrees earn such a low return to their schooling, and cannot rule out some sort of prejudice towards foreign education obtained in certain countries, although differences in the type and quality of schooling, or simply an inability on the part of Canadians to accurately judge the worth of foreign degrees (i.e., an information problem), seem to be more likely explanations (Alboim, et. al. 2005).

Research also found that while foreign-born visible minority members are at a disadvantage in the wage labour force, visible minorities who are native-born and self-employed do substantially better than the general self-employed Canadian-born population (Maxim, 1992). Satzewich and Wong (2003) suggest that, the decline of mechanized jobs in present-day Canada and the wearing down of the standard employment connections and chances for ascendant mobility for latest groups of immigrants are attached to self-employment or free enterprise within an ethnic economy. This situation is somewhat similar to earlier times in Canadian history when private enterprise was chosen by groups like the Chinese and Jewish communities because of blocked mobility in the mainstream labour market. There is some evidence to suggest that the

present-day ethno cultural private enterprise is also unswerving with the new large-scale formation of the transnational actors, and the interconnected formation of the global approach to social life and citizenship (Portes, 1999). From a macro-economic standpoint, very high levels of employment can be a mixed blessing. When full employment is attached with a skilled and flowing labour force, the economy is able to get better, resulting in an improved national standard of living. In contrast, an inadequate supply of labour due to non-recognition of foreign professional credentials can have subverting effects particularly in an economy as regionalized as Canada's, and in due course puts increasing demands on income remuneration and values.

While immigration to Canada has increased over the past decade, many skilled workers are having difficulty becoming fully integrated into their chosen fields of expertise. Canada's immigrant selection system awards points to applicant with highly developed educational qualifications. Subsequent to arriving in Canada despite the fact that immigrants goes through the pre-arrival assessment procedures, immigrants in general are not well-informed about the procedure of foreign credentials acknowledgment. Upon landing in Canada, immigrants are faced with a difficult and perhaps prolonged, expensive, and exasperating procedure on their own. Profoundly entrenched in precedent policies, the existing issue of foreign credentialing represents all the negativity of the connotation of immigrant (Guo, 2009).

While Canada has been praised as an open and liberal society, it has been condemned for failing to acknowledge diversity as a legitimate and precious expression of the human experience. One demonstration of such condemnation pertains to the non-recognition of immigrants' preceding qualifications and work practice, which is seen as the most exceptional social policy issue today.

The term foreign credential, which is the focal point of this thesis, can be defined according to Statistics Canada (2003), as any formal education higher than a high school diploma, including professional or technical qualifications and any other degrees, diplomas, or certificates received outside Canada, on one hand. While Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR), on the other hand, is the process of verifying education, training and job experience obtained in another country and comparing it to the standards established for Canadian professionals.

The non-recognition of credentials, training and job experience from immigrant home countries continues to represent a major challenge to the provincial and federal governments of Canada. Even though there is evidence that the introduction of the point system in the immigration policy was designed to erase the exclusion of immigrants based on their sex and race, nevertheless there are still biases that are not as overt as before in the present day immigration policy.

This now brings us to the initial question relating to the reasons why the credentials of foreign skilled immigrants' are accredited less positively than those of native born Canadians. Foreign trained professionals are on average faced with both systemic and individual barriers that prevent, in one way or the other, their integration into the Canadian work force

## **Structural Barriers**

### ***5.1: Negative Perception about the Quality of Immigrants' Credentials by Canadian***

#### ***Evaluators:***

Within the past decade research evidence indicates that Canada has placed extraordinary emphasis on the recruitment of migrants with skills. But once these immigrants especially those from the Global South arrive Canada; they are faced with systemic problem of credentials' non-

recognition when compared to immigrants from countries of the Global North. (Hawthorne, 2007)

Subsequently, one relevant factor of the structural barriers or obstacles faced by foreign professional immigrants with regards to the non-recognition of their credentials revolves mostly around the negative perception about the quality of their credentials by Canadian evaluators. Research studies have and continue to indicate that, the credentials of foreign professional immigrants are discounted or devalued more likely than those of native born Canadian. The major or most presented reason given by all stake-holders involved in the accreditation or recognition process of foreign professional credentials is that the quality of their credentials does not meet the Canadian standard (Sweetman, 2004).

If the quality of education from immigrants' country is not up to Canadian standard, then the question now is what is the Canadian standard in terms of quality of education? Basically, the quality of education is judged if a country's educational system falls within the recognition of the international literacy and numeracy test score. By this nature, the Canadian evaluators feel that the quality of the Canadian education is of high standard because it falls within the standard recognized by the international literacy and numeracy test score, and as such, any country that does not meet up with this expectation; such country is classified to be having lower quality or standard of education.

While existing literature has and continued to indicate that immigrants or people from third world or developing countries are on average better educated than Canadian born (Wald and Fang, 2008), Canadian credential evaluators continue to devalue or refuse to recognize or accredit foreign immigrants credentials on the basis of lower quality of education.

Technically or practically, most immigrants from developing or third world or countries of the Global South put in about 15 to 18 years of their life to schooling. This includes 6 years of elementary education, 6 years of secondary education, and 4 to 8 years of university education depending on the chosen course of study. And I would like to state here that education within the periphery of most of these developing countries is not a recognized right but a privilege. It depends in most cases on individual/family affordability. Within these societies, parents/individual family breaks through all the political as well as socio-economic hardships within the environment they lived in to fulfill their parental responsibility of providing the best quality education for their children.<http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat57/sub380/item2155.html>

Thus far, the Canadian immigration/Government draws on the immigrants' years of educational attainment as a compulsory entry requirement for intended immigrants to Canada. This again questions the position of the Canadian evaluator in terms of the quality of education. That is the quality of immigrant from third world or developing countries does not meet up to Canadian standard. If the quality of immigrants education does not meet up to Canadian standard, then why is it that the Canadian immigration/government wants the better educated in these countries to come to Canada?

Generally, the Canadian personnel in charge of making decisions on credential recognition and accreditation feels that the Canadian educational system is better and more trustworthy when compared to educational systems in other countries. One reason for this stems from the fact that those placed in charge of making decisions regarding immigrants' recognition of credential might not have adequate knowledge of immigrants' educational systems and standards, and as a result they are devalued or discounted for one reason or the other.

Practically, the effect of globalization on migration policies, and on the degree, trend and composition of migrant flows, has become one of the most debated and controversial arguments in migration literature. Zolberg (2001) had traced the evolution of alarmist popular social science commentary on migration, paralleled in more moderate form in the academic literature. In different ways, Brimelow (1995) provides apocalyptic visions of a Western world beset by massive migration pressures from barbarous, degenerating regions of the developing world, coupled with tension-filled anxieties about growing inequity between the native population and other racial categories.

Nyberg-Sorensen (2002) argues that among the factors contributing to an increase in the volume of velocity of migration in the last five decades is the liberalization of exit, first, from the post-colonial world as imperial restrictions on movement of colonial subjects fell away, and later from former communist countries, after the collapse of communism. Increased possibilities of out-migration have been coupled with greater awareness of growing disparities in life chances between rich and poor countries, and the spread of violent conflicts often in the same poor regions (Zolberg, 2001).

Globalization involves the circulation of capital, production, and goods; the global infiltration of new technologies in the form of means of transport, communication, and media; and the expansion of regional and transnational political developments and alliances such as the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the European Court of Human Rights, and grassroots politics. These processes have exacerbated disparities among regions, countries, and communities, giving further momentum to migration. A related effect of globalization is the further differentiation of migrants in terms of ethnic and class backgrounds as well as an increased feminization of migrations (Nyberg-Sorensen, 2002).

Traditionally, international migration occurs as a result of inequity in development between sending and receiving societies. It basically occurs due to a combination of supply-push and demand-pull factors. Migration pressures are thus dependent on eliminating levels of overpopulation and poverty in less developed countries. The migration-development link usually revolves around recruitment, remittances, and return (Papademetriou and Martin, 1991).

Recruitment is generally understood as intimately related to the conditions producing emigration. Such conditions include both migrant motivation and facilitating factors. Negative or low economic growth, population growth, high under- and unemployment rates, combined with unequal income distribution, and high pressures on land and urban environments drive people to seek employment abroad due to a lack of alternatives back home. Poor governance is another major factor for emigration especially among the highly skilled. According to Gamburd (2000), recruitment mechanisms range from individual to collective, from official to unofficial, and from government-led to employment-led. There is a no consensus on the optimal recruitment mechanism, but worker recruitment eventually creates networks linking particular rural or urban communities in the sending countries with specific labor markets in the receiving countries. When such networks are established, they become valuable assets for those who have access to them. Moreover, they represent the means by which migration becomes a self-perpetuating, semi-autonomous process. It is generally believed that a lack of local development options is the root cause of economic migration.

In terms of permanent migration, the traditional receivers' policies favor highly qualified, educated, well-off immigrants; very few places still exist for unskilled workers unless they qualify under family reunion programs. Economic criteria also are applied in the selection of business migrants who bring capital and establish businesses (United Nations Secretariat, 1997a).



According to Castles (2001), gone were the days when traditional receivers were seeking migrants to populate unsettled regions, or to increase their populations. All countries are increasingly responding to the processes of globalization which have led to a new volatility and diversity in migration movements.

Bauder (2003) argues that the non-recognition of foreign credentials amount to the systematic exclusion of immigrant workers from the upper segments of the labor market asserting that institutionalized processes of cultural distinction contribute to the segmentation of immigrant labor. Akabari, (1999) observes that the level of education among immigrants in Canada has steadily increased since the 1950s. Nevertheless, immigrants have failed to benefit from their educational attainments and have lower returns on education than Canadian-born workers (Reitz, 2001). According to Thompson (2000), the level of education fails as an accurate predictor of labor-market performance among immigrants within the capitalist society.

Cultural capital is a critical factor in the structuring of capitalist society (Bourdieu 1984, 1986; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Bourdieu (1986) distinguishes between several forms of cultural capital elaborating that embodied cultural capital signifies worth through corporal representation; objectified cultural capital associates value with the consumption and appropriation of cultural goods; and institutionalized cultural capital signifies cultural competence through institutional sanction, such as an educational degree or college certificate. Observing that three form of cultural capital cannot be completely divorced from each other; Craig (1994); Zukin (1995) concurs that labor-market geographers have tended to emphasize the role of embodied and objectified cultural capitals immigrants, whose foreign education and credentials are not recognized in Canada, lose access to the occupations they previously held. Although newly arriving immigrants may be endowed with the same amount of education and

experience as Canadian-trained workers, they are excluded from upper labor-market segments to which Canadian educated workers have access because of the differential assessment of their credentials. There are large differences in the transferability of education obtained outside of Canada (Thompson, 2000). Immigrants from South and Central Asia, the Middle East, Southern and Eastern Europe and Africa have restricted access to high-skill occupations in Canada (Thompson, 2000). The national origin of institutionalized cultural capital is apparently an important factor in the Canadian labor market.

The non-recognition of foreign credentials creates a division between Canadian-born and immigrant labor. In Collins' (1979), the place of education becomes a mechanism of labor-market distinction. Education enforces the division of labor according to national origin and place of education, and thus the Canadian educational and certification systems transform inherited Canadian birthplace into economic privilege.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argue that the difficulties immigrants encounter in the recognition of their foreign credentials can be interpreted as a systematic process of labor-market exclusion, facilitating the reproduction of a professional class. Accordingly, Canadian professional organizations, supported by federal and provincial legislation, enforce the reproduction of their own members through the differential treatment of foreign-trained and Canadian-trained workers. Rigorous certification systems favor individuals with Canadian education, training and experience, and disadvantage immigrants.

Many upper-segment occupations in Canada are stringently regulated by professional organizations. Some of the toughest standards are imposed on the medical profession. The Medical Council of Canada requires foreign-educated professionals to pass a written exam and,

in most cases, obtain an additional two to six years of training (Heath Canada, 2002). Provincial health-regulation bodies impose further requirements. Other occupations that are provincially regulated include law, nursing, social work and teaching. The registered Nurses Association of Ontario (2002) requires a passing grade on the Canadian Nurse Registration Examination and also judges applicants on the basis of education, competence and evidence of good character and fitness to practice. Unfortunately for immigrants, many regulatory bodies are not set up to assess foreign credentials prior to their arrival in Canada (CICIC 2002), making it impossible for immigrants to assess the degree of devaluation prior to immigration.

In most cases, accreditation procedures favor Canadian-educated applicants. The Canadian Architectural Accreditation Board, for example, deliberately charged graduates from Canadian schools only Canadian \$300 and foreign graduates \$1,000 for the assessment of their professional credential (CACB 2003a, b). Some regulations allow foreigners to work without certification, but only in subordinate positions. Non-registered engineers, for example, are allowed to practice as long as a licensed engineer supervised them (CICIC 2002). Thus, foreign-educated engineers, who cannot be immediately certified, are subordinated to Canadian-trained engineers.

The professional groups like medicine, law and engineering are cultural communities that engage in practices of cultural inclusion and exclusion to ensure their own reproduction (Collins, 1979). The entry requirements to these communities are controlled by a critical infrastructure (Zukin, 1995) consisting largely of professional associations which function as the gatekeepers of professionalism and which define entry qualifications according to their own cultural biases and agendas. These professional associations have an interest in defining the entry requirements in such a manner that newly arriving immigrants are excluded. This objective is achieved

through the valorization of credentials obtained in Canada and the devaluation of credentials obtained elsewhere.

Hence Sweetman (2004) notes that the lower evaluation of immigrants' credentials reflects a difference in the genuine quality of the education, thereby resulting to lower market worth of immigrants' credentials. Research studies reveal that the negative perception of the quality of immigrants' qualifications tends to affect their employment possibilities. Gilmore & Lepetit (2008) note that recent immigrants with a post-secondary education (certificate, diploma or degree) reported lower rates of employment than their Canadian native born counterparts. In addition, Preston et al. (2011) notes that, "the unemployment gap between immigrants and the Canadian born actually increased at higher level of education" (Preston et al. 2011, p.14).

More research findings as revealed by Zietsma (2010) indicates that while the unemployment rate for immigrants with foreign degrees in a regulated line of work falls within the range of 7 percent, the unemployment rate for immigrants who had studied in Canadian universities was at a lower range of 4.2 percent. Furthermore, although Canadian society has evolved, in 2006 only 24 percent of foreign educated immigrants who had studied in regulated occupations were practicing in their field, compared to 62 percent of Canadian born professionals. And those immigrants with educational and work experiences obtained outside of Canada lagged behind the Canadian born by 27 percent in their ability to secure employment in their field of specialization even after 10 years in the country (Zietsma, 2010).

The discrepancies among the figures stated above have been attributed to the negative perception about the quality of immigrants' qualification among Canadian credentials evaluators. Perception about the quality of immigrant education are linked to structural factors associated

with policies, standard and valuation procedures of foreign credentials. The agencies which provide the assessment of foreign professionals' education/credentials have and continue to contribute to income deficiency for foreign-trained immigrants within Canadian society (McDade, 1988).

One problem associated with this factor, in the opinion of Reitz (2001a), is that the Canadian licensing bodies for professions and trades do not recognize foreign professional or trade credentials. Immigrants, especially those that are primarily connected with such professions as physicians, nurses, as well as professional engineers, are rejected an equivalent license for work in Canada. A second problem is that employers often do not recognize foreign professional or trade credentials even for immigrants who have received Canadian licenses. In this situation, Canadian licensing bodies issue the licenses, but employers still believe that immigrants' foreign background is not equal to the corresponding Canadian background. Thirdly, employers do not recognize immigrants' foreign credentials in non-licensed occupational fields. This problem is widely related to such field as business management. Canadian employers might require a specific educational background and might not consider a comparable foreign degree to be equal to the Canadian standard. Finally, Canadian employers fail to recognize much of foreign education, especially from the global south in general. In many occupational fields in which employers may require a general education, such as in sales supervision fields, lower level management, public relations, and policy analysis, there is a tendency to evaluate foreign education lower than the Canadian one. Moreover, negative perceptions about immigrants' foreign education affect not only hiring practices but also promotions (Reitz, 2001, p.351-352).

The above noted factors revolve around the conviction that many institutions within Canadian society fall short in recognizing immigrants' educational qualification acquired in a foreign country. While we intend to recognize and value the argument of the Canadian credentials evaluators in relation to the quality of immigrants' qualifications, what remains troublesome, in the opinion of this paper, is that taking into consideration the principle of equality and fairness, how justifiable is the application of a *double standard* in the credentials evaluation or recognition process of foreign professional immigrants, most especially those from countries of the Global South. Alboim, Finnie, and Meng (2005), for example, reported that a foreign university degree possessed by an immigrant on average had an earnings' return of less than a third of a Canadian university degree held by a native-born employee, unless the immigrant was white; then the foreign degree was comparable in value to a Canadian degree. Reitz (2005) and Swidinsky & Swidinsky (2002) also note that the credentials of the growing segment of visible minority immigrants are evaluated less favorably than those of white immigrants and native Canadians.

The question we need to find solution to leans towards the real motives behind why the Canadian credentials evaluators, do not apply the same procedures to every foreign skilled immigrant coming into the country. What are the underlying factors surrounding why the Canadian credentials evaluators are picking and choosing which credential and from which country of origin they would evaluate higher and which they would evaluate lower?

Evidence suggests that the actions of the Canadian credentials evaluators' in relation to credential evaluation and recognition falls within what Guo (2009) classified as the "triple glass effect". That is, "the glass gate", which refuses immigrants' access to protected professional districts; "the glass door", which denies immigrants' the right of entry to professional

employment within a high paying establishment and “the glass ceiling”, which prevent immigrants from stepping into administrative as well as executive positions.

While it is usually denied, evidence has and continues to indicate that the motivational force behind foreign credential evaluation and recognition is guided by ethno-racial bias/discrimination. The politics of credentials evaluation, recognition as well as reaccreditation within Canada revolves around the reality that only foreign credentials from developing or third world countries are been discounted. Anisef and Kilbride (2001) maintained that immigrant minorities often face devaluation of their credentials when seeking employment and they encounter other forms of systemic discrimination in Canadian labor markets. This takes us to the next structural obstacles.

## ***5.2: Racial Discrimination:***

Racial discrimination is a structural barrier that is of vital significance to the foregoing discussion relating to the issue of foreign professional credential devaluation within Canadian society. The Canadian credentials evaluators contend that the reason why foreign professional credentials are been devalued or discounted when they enter Canada is that the quality of their educational qualification does not meet the Canadian standard. But taking a thorough look into those that have been or are affected by the above justification, it becomes obvious (as reflected in the section on classification of race below) that they are people that do not fall within the range of the European historical lineage. They are people from countries categorized as Third World, developing countries, or countries of the Global South. These are people classified to belong to the *other side* of civilization or modernization because they do not fall within the periphery of the European mainstream culture.

Historically, the practice of ‘race classification’ was once only used to misrepresent non-European peoples. This discussion is very significant because it helps us understand the major events surrounding the issue of human differentiation. Today, the concept ‘race’ has come to symbolize an ideology that affects, either positively or negatively, the meaning we attach to most of our observations and experiences; but because the concept is more usually invoked by or attached to negative imagery. In our society today, the discourse(s) on ‘race’ are exceedingly challenging and subject to continuing contestation(s). The concept “Race”, according to Howard Winant (1994) “has become an enduring, deeply sedimented means of knowing and organizing the social world ... subject to continual contestation and reinterpretation” (Winant 1994, p. xiii). What these words imply is that though we are continuously flattered, for example by discourses on anti-racist resistance and policy, into accepting that the concept of race lost its explanatory as well as interpretative significance with the abolition of Trans-Atlantic slavery, but the idea nevertheless continues to affect our thinking. Doubtless, there are many who would say that this influence is today felt in every nook and cranny of the globe.

While it was evident to the ancients and into the middle ages that there were people with different identities as well as different geographical origins/location; the issue relating to categorizing people along racial lines during those periods did not seem apparent. In fact, Samuel Stanhope Smith, cited in Banton (1987) dismisses any suggestion that in pre-modern times attempts would have been made to classify people of different cultures/ethnicities as a ‘useless labour’, since it would have been so difficult to draw the necessary distinctions” (Banton 1987, p.34). Accordingly, in the face of the obvious fact that during the ancient and Middle Ages there were contrary explanations among various natural historians with regards to the existence of *different human specimens*; the most well established conversation, on the other



hand, seemed to have centered on the premise that human existence had the same, or a single, genealogy where physical/biological differences between human groups were not given substantial social connotation.

Historically, it appears that in Europe the process of classifying/categorizing human beings along relentlessly *racial* lines (what is otherwise known as the ‘ideology of race’) took shape during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The greatest task facing scientific researchers during those times was to establish the ‘natural method’ of classification for people belonging to different ethno-cultural groups. Subsequently, in 1684, Francois Bernier wrote the first post-Classical publication on the classification of humans into different *races*, “titled *Nouvelle division de la terre par les différents espèces ou races qui l'habitent* (*New division of Earth by the different species or races which inhabit it*) (Banton, 1987, p.33). This publication thus served as a model for the racialized categorization of world peoples into different groups; and as a result, it became the major focal area of scientific research by various 18<sup>th</sup> century researchers. Cultural anthropologists as well as biological anthropologist (bio-scientists) then engaged in extensive research in efforts to establish the position that humans around the world did not have the same ancestral lineage (genealogy). Thus it was in 1735 that Carolus Linnaeus, inventor of zoological taxonomy, classified/divided human beings (Homo-sapiens) into Europaeus, Asiaticus, Americanus and Afer. Under this classification, Homo Sapiens Europeus was described as active, acute, and adventurous, whereas Homo Sapiens Afer was crafty, lazy and careless (Banton, 1987, p.33).

Following from the above brief historical trajectory of human classification, the European idea of “race”, in concert with many of the thoughts presently associated with the phrase, took place at the time of scientific revolution and the era of European imperialism and colonization;

where politico-economic links between European nations and world peoples of diverse cultural and religious traditions were established.

As Europeans came into wider contact with people from different parts of the world, they speculated about the physical, social, and cultural differences among the various human groups. This era in human historical experience could be regarded as the influential era of the overt display of racial superiority and racial inferiority—or the beginnings of the subordination and discrimination of other peoples (acute racism) (Banton, 1987, p. 36). Here, people of different groups *outside* of Europe were classified as inferior and relegated to the background. This unequal classification during the colonial era thus influenced in a biased way the works of most historians, anthropologists, physiologists, as well as others from related disciplines. Indeed, most of the discourses emerging during the colonial period were encircled in this unequal race classification. Most of the research findings of the era were biased in nature in the sense that they tended to valorize and promote colonial superiority. Historical accounts instruct that the scientific classification of physical and genetic (phenotypic) variations were routinely attached to racist concepts about characteristic predispositions of different groups; here the most desirable features were accorded to the White European peoples, while the other races were accorded a variety of increasingly derogatory/detrimental attributes. So, today trends of events have directly and indirectly tolled this historical ordinance. Against this backdrop, it would be the view of this paper to indicate here that, the devaluation or discounting of foreign professional credentials, most especially those from Third World regions/developing countries is analogous to the above historical classification of race.

A personal behavioural study conducted in 1990 by Decimal Research Ltd. (cited in Reitz and Breton, 1994, p. 68) reveals that 90 percent of Canadians agreed with the statement that, “All

racism are created equal.” Today, most Canadians tend to still believe that all races are created equal, and the dominant White majority is generally open to residency and citizenship and commingling with and among other ethnic and racial minorities in public places and social events. Yet, while Canadian attitudes may pretend to represent imagery of an organized and democratic diversity, research studies indicate that this same dominant majority are also strongly resisting the admittance of minorities to the higher occupational structures in the work world. Thus, a report released by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2000), entitled “Unequal Access: A Canadian Profile of Racial Differences in Education, Employment and Income,” confirmed that ethno racial diversity is generally seen at the bottom and middle level of the labour force pyramid, but “the higher the pyramid, the less diverse and the Whiter it becomes” (Foster, 2006, p. 302). Also in a 2005 Ipsos-Reid poll conducted on a randomly selected sample of 1,001 Canadians, it was discovered that one in six adults, or 17 per cent of those surveyed, said they had experienced racism personally. The survey also found that seven per cent, or 1.7 million Canadians, would not welcome someone of another race as a next-door neighbour. As well, 13 per cent (3.1 million Canadians) said they would never marry or have a relationship with a person of another race, and 15 per cent (3.4 million Canadians) said skin colour makes a difference in their workplace (CTV.ca News Staff, Mar. 21 2005).

Hence race, as reflected in one of the prior section above, has become a continuing as well as a genuinely means of knowing and organizing the social world. (Winant 1994, p. xiii) It has come to represent a philosophy that affects, either optimistically or indifferently, the connotation or denotation we attach to most of our observations and experiences. While we sometimes deny the notion that racism is real or trying to avoid getting in race related subject

matters. However, experience reveals that racism or racist tendencies exist within almost all walks of life within various societies we live in today.

Institutionalized racist practices embedded in the immigration system and within the wider Canadian social consciousness is a systemic barrier that continues to marginalize foreign trained professionals, especially those from Third World countries. Shibao Guo (2007) refers to the existing accreditation process as a system that is structured in a way which preserves the privileges of dominant social groups while obstructing new members from minority racial or ethnic groups. She asserts that Canada's devaluation of foreign immigrant credentials and work experience, especially those of individuals from developing countries, can be attributed to a "deficit model of difference" (Guo 2007, p. 37). This means that educational knowledge and professional capabilities of immigrants from Third World countries are perceived very differently from those of immigrants from developed countries due to racial biases against the former. Individuals from Third World countries manifest a form of racial or ethnic "difference" that is connected with the notion of professional inferiority.

Guo (2007) argues that although educated, highly skilled professional immigrants come to the country's labour force with significant human capital resources, Canadian professional organizations and employers devalue their education and training and render their skills and their previous work experience in their home countries obsolete. Also, in their 2001 newsletter report, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) reveals that "immigrants find employment one way or the other but not in field of their own specialty and ironically not for the skills which qualified them to be an immigrant to Canada in the first place. So in one stroke "we" have de-skilled those people who "we" chose as "suitable" immigrants for Canada while not resolving the issue of shortages of labour in those fields for which we chose them" (Shakir, &

McIsaac, 2001) The after implication is that, it leads to a situation where skilled immigrants are disempowered and unable to obtain jobs in their areas of specialization. Those who have the material resources needed to undergo re-training are able to re-enter their areas of specialization after they have obtained that retraining, but those who lack the material resources required to gain re-accreditation often end up with their hopes remaining unfulfilled.

Basran et al (1998) similarly point out that racial discrimination stemming from foreign trained professionals having cultural backgrounds and experiences that differ from those of Canadian trained professionals might prevent them from obtaining employment in their fields as well preventing them from gaining fair re-accreditation. Basran et al (1998) state: “As visible minority foreign- trained professionals have a distinctive cultural background and experience that differs from the white foreign-trained professionals, they may be more disadvantaged in the Canadian labour force” (Basran et al 1998, p. 4.) Samuels (2004) revealed that immigrant surveys and immigrant-serving agencies also suggest that the accreditation processes in the professions/trades are not inclusive. The professions/trades would prefer to restrict the supply of those who are in the profession/trade so that its members can continue to enjoy a higher level of income. This has been particularly true among physicians and surgeons, dentists, and veterinarians, among other professions.

A related study conducted by McDade (1988) cited by Oxana Solovyeva, 2011, p.9, described the nature of barriers with regards to recognition of foreign credentials in the trades and professions. McDade’s findings suggest that “in trades and many professional fields, foreign-trained immigrants often have to meet more requirements to receive professional certificates in comparison to persons trained in the same fields in Canada. For example, in Ontario, foreign-trained immigrants in trades were required to acquire more work experience

before getting a permission to take qualification exams than persons trained in the province. Immigrants training in their home countries were often not considered as adequate experience.” (McDade 1988, p. 9-11) In many professional occupations, any formal training and practical work experience obtained outside the province were not recognized and were expected to be repeated in the province. In the medical professions, internship programs, as the final step in the certification process, were largely restricted for immigrants with foreign credentials (McDade 1988, p.13). In engineering, foreign-trained professionals also were required to have more experience than Canadian graduates. For instance, in British Columbia, Canadian-trained engineers were required to obtain two years of practical training after completion of an undergraduate degree in engineering whereas foreign-trained graduates of accredited schools had to have three years of satisfactory experience” (McDade 1988: 18-19). Thus, McDade’s research clearly suggests that there is a problem with recognition of foreign credentials.

In other many research survey projects, where foreign-trained professionals were uncharacteristically asked to describe their own perceptions of credential problems and occupational disadvantages, Fernando and Prasad (1986), for example, reported that among professional immigrants interviewed, particularly doctors and engineers, 71 percent had perceived barriers to full recognition. In addition, Basran and Zong's (1998) research emphasize the importance of personal experience and perceptions in understanding both individual and structural barriers. In their study of 404 Indian and Chinese professional immigrants residing in the Vancouver area, they found out that only 18% of them at the time of the study worked in their own profession in Canada. While only 6% agreed that the provincial governments had conducted a fair recognition of their foreign credentials. `When asked about the possible sources

of discrimination in the accreditation process, 65% reported colour, 69% nationality or ethnic origin, and 79% the inability to speak English.

The Ethnic Diversity Survey (2003) in their contribution presented a picture of the whole ethno-cultural make-up of the Canadian population in regard to the experience and perception of discriminatory barriers. The survey asked respondents how often they felt out of place within Canada because of their ethnicity, culture, race skin colour, language, accent or religion. The research found that several distinctive ethno-cultural prototypes emerged. First, visible minorities were more likely than others to say that they felt uncomfortable or out of place in Canada at least some of the time because of their ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion. It also found that one in five visible minorities (20%) experienced discrimination or unfair treatment “sometimes or “often,” while only one in 20 (5%) of non-visible minorities reported experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment sometimes or often because of the same ethno-cultural indicators. Further, among the indicators of discrimination or unfair treatment, race or colour was the most common reason for perceived discrimination or unfair treatment. Finally, the research found that discrimination or unfair treatment was most likely to occur in the workplace.

The research further stressed that 24% of all visible minorities in Canada said that they felt uncomfortable or out of place because of their ethno-cultural characteristics. This was almost three times the share of people who were not visible minorities who felt uncomfortable. Generational differences also indicate that visible minorities may feel uncomfortable for a longer period of time than do their non-visible minority counterparts after they or their families arrive in Canada. Offspring of first generation visible minorities who had arrived between 1991 and 2001, 29% said they felt uncomfortable or out of place in Canada some, most or all of the time.

This proportion was only slightly lower, at 23%, for visible minorities who came before 1991. In contrast, among the population who were not visible minorities, a higher proportion of recent arrivals than of those who had resided here for over 10 years (18% versus 9%) felt uncomfortable or out of place in Canada because of their ethno-cultural characteristics.

Finally, the Stats Can Ethnic Diversity Survey (2003) asked all respondents who had reported discrimination or unfair treatment because of their ethno-cultural characteristics in the previous five years, whether they had experienced such treatment on the street, in a store, bank or restaurant, at work or when applying for a job or promotion, when dealing with the police or courts, or somewhere else. No matter what the location, a higher proportion of visible minorities than non-visible minorities reported discrimination or unfair treatment in Canada in the previous five years. The survey identified about 35% of those 15 years and older who had sometimes or often been discriminated against, and about 26% of the population reported sometimes or often experiencing discrimination in the streets in the last five years. However, among the places and situations asked about, the most common situation where perceived discrimination or unfair treatment was experienced was at work or when applying for a job or promotion. Overall, 56% of those who had sometimes or often experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their ethno-cultural characteristics in the past five years, said they had experienced such treatment at work or when applying for work (Stats Can Ethnic Diversity Survey 2003, p.25).

Furthermore, Samuels (2004) interviewed nine foreign-trained graduates of various disciplines from developing countries living in Ontario. All except one consider that they are excluded from becoming accredited because of undertones of racism prevailing in various practices by accreditation agencies. Veterinarians and Dentists are particularly affected. Among



Veterinarians interviewed, Samuels (2004) further emphasized, stated that there is a “strong element of exclusion” felt by graduates from developing countries, since internship positions are very limited and there are not many visible minorities who own animal hospitals. The lack of Canadian experience, the accents and culture of visible minorities prevent them from getting internship positions even when their help is offered free of charge, they maintain. Most of them say somewhere race is coming into play.

Systemic or institutional discrimination can be a major barrier to newcomers. By its very nature, systemic discrimination, results from the unintended consequences of well-known employment structures and practices. Its effect is to prevent employment prospects and remunerations for members of certain groups. Since the discrimination is not enthused by a conscious act, it is more subtle to identify. According to Agocs (2004), “Systemic or institutional discrimination consists of patterns in an organization’s behaviour, policies or practices that create or continue a position of relative disadvantage for people identified by the *Code*.” (Agocs 2004, p.3)

The above information suggests, in concurrence with “the discrimination thesis,” that the control of entry to the professions has caused systematic exclusion and occupational disadvantages for professional immigrants (Boyd (1985); McDade (1988); Trovato and Grindstaff (1986); Rajagopal (1990); Ralston (1988); Beach and Worswick (1989). For instance, Boyd provides an analysis of differences between Canadian-born and foreign-born workers in the acquisition of occupational status. Boyd argues that the Canadian-born received a greater return for their education compared to the foreign-born because of "difficulties of transferring educational skill across national boundaries" (Boyd 1985, p. 405). Several earlier research studies use census data to demonstrate the difficulties in translating educational achievements

into occupational advantage that are faced by selected cohorts of immigrants (Trovato and Grindstaff, 1986; Grindstaff, 1986). Pendakur and Pendakur's (1996) research findings suggests that even when controlling for occupation, industry, education, potential experience, official language knowledge and household type, visible minorities earn significantly less than native-born white workers. Reitz (2001) argues the cause of low earnings among immigrants is overwhelmingly pay inequity, with some underutilization of skills. Employers, he emphasized, often do not recognize foreign education and experience (Reitz, 2001).

Ferrer and Riddell (2008) in their study of how the human capital of immigrants is rewarded in Canada in relation to the return to years of schooling and to program completion, concluded that immigrants receive lower returns to years of schooling than native-born Canadians. In a related findings, Wald and Fang (2008) trying to address the problem of over-education of recent immigrants in the Canadian labour market concurred with other studies that recent immigrants; when compared to the Canadian-born workers, are found to have a comparatively high rate of over-education and earn practically low returns for excess years of schooling.

This stemmed from the reality that within Canada, there is no consistence as well as adequate mechanism in place to evaluate foreign credentials. This is said to be true because existing literature reveals that within Canada there is no centralized agency controlling the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials (see Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) (2008)

### ***5.3: Lack of Consistency and Adequate Evaluation Mechanism among credentials evaluators:***

Lack of consistency and inadequate evaluation mechanisms in the foreign professional credential accreditation process has also been recognized as one of the barriers hindering the successful integration/assimilation of most professional immigrants into the Canadian labour market. To begin with, in Canada there is no centralized agency overseeing the evaluation of foreign credentials. This is so, because there are numerous bodies or organizations both at the federal and provincial level with the responsibilities of evaluating foreign credentials. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) (2008) reveals that “at present, pan-Canadian standards governing the practice of international credential assessments do not exist. While there are worldwide accepted common guiding principles for good practice in the assessment of international credentials, which are widely used in the practice of credential evaluation, for the most part each organization employs its own methodology when verifying the authenticity of documents and determining the academic comparability of education received outside of Canada”( HRSDC 2008, p. 7)

Depending on the nature of the evaluation, immigrants may need to approach one or all of the following organizations: (1) provincial and territorial credential assessment services, (2) regulatory or professional bodies, (3) educational institutions, and (4) employers. The outcomes of the evaluation may serve one or more of the following purposes: general employment, studying in Canada, and professional certification or licensing in Canada.

More specifically, five provincial and territorial credential assessment agencies provide foreign credential assessment services to immigrants. These agencies are: International Qualifications Assessment Service (Alberta), International Credential Evaluation Service (BC), Academic Credentials Assessment Service (Manitoba), World Education Services (Ontario), and

Education Credential Evaluation (Quebec). These five agencies which form the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC), facilitates the dissemination and exchange of information regarding international educational standards/guidelines. Small licensing bodies may need help from these organizations to determine the equivalency of an immigrant's foreign credentials. However, large professional associations (e.g. the College of Physicians and Surgeons) usually conduct their own assessments and determine whether the applicants need further training or tests in order to re-enter their professions in Canada. While professional and regulatory bodies determine the professional standing of the qualification, the assessment of foreign credentials for the purpose of academic study resides in the hands of education providers such as universities and colleges.

Furthermore, the process of recertification varies for each profession and each sub-specialty. Different occupational subgroups face different challenges depending on the degree of control held by the Canadian professions. Based on licensing regulations, professions can be categorized as protected and unprotected (Salaff & Greve, 2003). Generally, the protected occupations, as Guo (2009) suggest, requires professional certification in addition to a bachelor or higher degree, including architectural designers, engineers, doctors, and teachers, just to name a few. In addition, immigrants must also pass Canadian courses and examinations and acquire a period of supervised employment in Canada. For example, the medical profession requires foreign-trained professionals to take a certification examination in combination with language testing, and/or to undertake a period of internship or practicum in Canada. With multiple barriers in the protected professions, former professionals in these areas have the most trouble getting back to their original professions; because the processes and procedures that they must following to get recognized or certified are cumbersome, time consuming, costly, as well as

frustrating, and is true to my experience. Sometime in 2013, I happened to be honouring a doctor's appointment in Toronto. While I was in the office, I happened to engage on a one-on-one conversation with the nurse that was attending to me. During our conversation, a lot of issues were talked about. But what made this conversation a thing of relevancy to this paper is the part that relates to the nature of his job. He was a middle-eastern young man who was very smart, active and organized in the service he was providing. He was performing the job of a nurse and the way he was delivery the service cut my attention. This prompted me to ask him, if he likes the job he was doing. He said no but he had no other choice. He went on to say that he was a medical doctor in his country. But coming to Canada, his professionalism was not recognized and he is going through all relevant certification and re-certification process. The process in his opinion is very costly, time consuming and frustrating for him. So he had to do the job he was doing then so that he can save enough money to finish the re-certification process. He further emphasized that the good thing for him is that he is doing a lower level job within the same the line of profession which is a source of encouragement. But for those who could not get a job in the same line of profession, they might be discouraged if the process become too difficult and expensive and they might redirect their focus to a different line of discipline in other to survive he concluded. This is one of so many cases of professional immigrants' ordeal within the Canadian labour market requirements

By comparison, the unprotected professions—such as computer programmers, delivery coordinators, sales persons, and construction site supervisors—may require a bachelor degree or diploma but do not require certification. The unprotected professions provide greater access and opportunities because their fields are less institutionalized (Guo, 2009). This comparison reveals

the complexity involved in the process of recognition as well as devaluation processes of immigrants' credentials.

Basran et al (1998), in their article titled "Devaluation of foreign credentials as perceived by visible minority professional immigrants", argues that the devaluation of foreign credentials applies mainly to foreign professionals of visible minority status. The authors emphasize that the problem lies in the lack of consistency and "inadequate or inappropriate mechanisms" used in the evaluation process as most re-accreditation agents utilize arbitrary standards which are applied in a subjective, case by case manner (Basran et al, 1998, p.1). They argue that structural barriers which are embedded in the "policies and practices of professional regulatory bodies" lead to a situation where immigrants from Third World countries experience accreditation differently from immigrants from developed countries (Basran et al, 1998, p.1). Basran et al (1998) also note that credentials from certain foreign schools - for example, medical schools that are not listed by the World Health Organization - are not accepted by Canadian immigration authorities. Experience also reveals that credentials not recognized to be in an academic institution data base are not recognized or honoured. For example, in 2009, I was a witness to a very close family member of mine who was trying to further her education in one of the well-known higher institutions in Ontario. For privacy reasons, I cannot name the institution or the family member, but this family member had a degree from a recognized higher institution in her country. But during the course of the admission process, the family member was told by the academic institution in Canada that they could not give her any academic credit for the previous school years in her country because the foreign institution she attended was not in their data base, and that if she was to further her education in Canada, she needed to start from scratch. This was heart-breaking for her. But fortunately for her, she had a two year college diploma obtained from one of the colleges in

Canada, and was given some academic credit for those two years college experience by the academic institution. One problem connected to this is that the reputation or public profile of foreign educational institution may be regarded as more important than the quality of education received. Here, the focus on reputation may contribute to the biased nature of the process of accreditation where those immigrants already in the country who hold degree/certification from non- authorized/recognized institutions are the ones who wind up being in a disadvantageous position. Guo (2009) points to this possibility when she argues that the refusal of professional associations to re-accredit foreign credentials to Canadian standards may be situated in their inability to understand and translate “valid but different” educational knowledge and training gained (Guo 2009, p.1). Since the Canadian credentials evaluators do not understand to what degree their lack of adequate knowledge about foreign credentials affect the labour market prospects of most foreign professional immigrants; Guo (2009) further indicates that the subjection of immigrants to unfair conditions of accreditation might be a way for Canadian trained professionals to prevent competition and preserve their interests. She emphasize that sometimes the rejection of immigrants' qualifications may simply be seen by practitioners as an effort to reduce risk arising from ignorance of the credential in question. In the same regard, it also serves to control access to a profession so as to preserve hegemony and its lucrative nature. Thus, refusing to recognize immigrants' qualifications and experience as a legitimate knowledge perpetuates a regime of discrimination that is detrimental to the economic prospects of most professional immigrants within Canadian society.

While there may be no guarantee that an immigrant will receive an unswerving assessment of their qualifications from one assessment agency to another, the conclusion reached in most cases are far more the same than they are contradictory. Besides, some level of

inconsistency is to be expected as each organization proffered an evaluation based on their provincial/territorial directives, on one hand; and on the other hand, there is an advanced likelihood that myriad approaches will yield definitive conclusions since there is no well-known standard within Canada for the assessment of foreign professional skills.

Research studies suggest that the process involved in credentials evaluation of professional immigrants within Canada is ambiguous and uncertain in nature when compared to the native born Canadian. This vague and unclear nature tends to give room for biased or prejudiced propensity to play more imperative role. This, in other words will generate an atmosphere where credentials evaluators are compelled to rely more greatly on judgment calls when addressing the issue relating to foreign credential devaluation or accreditation/reaccreditation. Reitz (2005) stressed that even if credential evaluators have adequate or sufficient information about foreign qualifications, there is the possibility that they would still feel less confident about foreign qualification than the native born. In addition, there is also the possibility that Canadian credential evaluators might favour their ethnic in-group at the detriment of the ethnic out-group because of lack of well-established standard for evaluating foreign credentials within Canada. The situation relating to lack of well-established standard for evaluating foreign credentials create an environment that, in most cases, gives encouragement to the negative impression/ representation of foreign immigrants' qualifications and skills when compared to the qualifications of native born professionals. The lack of consistency among various credential evaluation stakeholders and agencies tends to create a complicated and mystifying structure for the immigrant. The problem associated with having various evaluations done during the assimilation progression can place excessive cost on the immigrant and unnecessary setbacks in the integration process.



Even in a labour market in which education-based skills are significant, and meritocratic practice is promoted, immigrants may experience structural difficulties. The first key approach to the study of these difficulties focuses on policies, regulations, and procedures which are evident in government agency reports concentrating on specific components of the accreditation process -Task Force on Access to Professions and Trades in Ontario, 1989; Alberta Task Force on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, 1992; Manitoba Working Group on Immigrant Credentials, 1992; Employment and Immigration Canada, 1993. Access to information on accreditation procedures, agencies involved in the assessment, and the nature of the evaluation itself are some of the aspects that have been studied by this approach.

### ***Personal/Individual Barriers***

While, structural barriers pertaining to low quality of education, institutional discrimination, and inconsistency in policies, criteria, and evaluation procedures have all been identified in the section above as some of the challenges that foreign professional immigrants faces in their quest for economic opportunities and integration into the Canadian labour market. However, the following section examines some of the possible personal/individual barriers or challenges that most foreign professional immigrants come across as they navigate their employment prospect within the Canadian work-force. These individual or personal obstacles include such challenges as the lack of Canadian experience, language proficiency, as well as the country of origin of prospective skilled immigrants.

#### ***5.4: Lack of Canadian experience:***

The non-recognition of prospective foreign professional work experience from outside of Canada by Canadian credentials evaluators and employers is a major barrier that has negatively

affected their prospect to equal employment opportunities within the Canadian labour market. Existing research studies reveals that most foreign professional immigrants faces differential treatment within the Canadian labour market because of non- recognition of their foreign credentials and work experiences, as well as the lack of Canadian work experience (Gulian 2010). According to the 2003 LSIC research analysis, 26 percent of foreign professional immigrants aged 25-44 reported that a lack of Canadian work experience were the most severe predicament they come across when looking for work in the first two years after their arrival. Hall & Sadouzai (2010) supporting the above analysis indicates that immigrants working in protected professions like health, business as well as natural and applied sciences were less expected to find full-time employment six months after their arrival than immigrants working in the unprotected hi-tech sector. The distinction in work-job related effects was ascribed to the transferability of expertise in the knowledge subdivision and to institutional barrier in relation to credential accreditation and recognition.

Individual characteristics and qualities can be encouraged as well as been affected by structural settings and circumstances. But failure to recognize individual hurdles in social environments and structural arrangements tend to blame immigrant professionals themselves for not able to secure proficient employment in Canada (see deficit theory in one of the sections above). However, individual conduct and actions does not develop in a vacuum; lacking Canadian experience is an individual circumstance, but it is also a structural element which relates to employers' refusal to recognize foreign credentials and to provide work for immigrants in jobs suitable to their educational qualification. The term "Canadian experience" for the most part is possibly used, in the view of Samuel (2004), as an innuendo for racial prejudice/ discrimination. From the vantage point of foreign professional visible minority immigrants, it

would be inaccurate to link precisely their work-related shortcomings to both the structural and personal barriers they encounter in their search for commensurate employment. But, their visible distinction can have the effect of preventing their smooth integration/assimilation into Canadian society, while public reaction to their physical appearance and cultural differences can only complicate the settlement process. This revolves around the reality that both visible minority natives and new immigrants are repeatedly exposed to discreet and unceremonious inequity as well as domination within the Canadian workplace, which in most cases lead to a demoralizing sense of hopelessness and loss of dignity among skilled immigrants. In addition, skilled visible minority immigrants are further exposed to the “Canadian experience” rule – which holds that you need Canadian experience to get a job. But how do these foreign professional immigrants get Canadian experience when the issue relating to Canadian experience is a core entry requirement to the Canadian labour market for immigrants? How do these immigrants get Canadian experience when most employers do not want to bear the cost and inconveniency of training and re-retraining of these foreign professional immigrants, even if they need “retraining” at all?

Van Rijn (1999) notes that, even with wide-ranging foreign training, without Canadian experience, many foreign professional visible minority immigrants cannot get recognized or confirmed within Canada. Without officially recognized documentation, they cannot get the experience to secure employment. Reitz (2003, p. 5-6) argues that even when transferability is not at issue, traditional prejudice may be operant, and the various institutional establishments within the society may present barriers. Some employers may tend to be suspicious of the importance of foreign credentials because they lack adequate knowledge of their qualifications, and because of a fear of the risks involved in “taking a chance” on what may be seen as an unfamiliar quality. Bureaucratic procedures in hiring may be tailored to local or “conventionally

esteemed” educational institutions, disadvantaging the foreign-trained. Since these traditional prejudices and conventional standards of authority tend to be broken-down along geographic and colour lines, they symbolize a form of racialization of skill-recognition that would compound other individual obstacles faced by immigrants, such as those based on language and motivation. It has even been suggested that the current place of work has the noticeable reality of managerial reproduction (Arrow, Bowles and Durlauf 2000), and is a probably interrelated preference, which functions to guarantee and establish Whiteness at the top level of business command and decision-making. While some might try to contest the above assumptions, what is evident within the structural make-up of most organizations is that taking into cognisance the composition of those holding higher positions within most organizations in our society before and now, the ratio of whites in charge of executive and other top administrative positions are higher than any other ethnic group within Canadian society.

A lack of adequate familiarity with the professional expressions and terminology used by Canadian businesses also serve as a constraint that prevent foreign skilled immigrants the opportunity to work in their field of expertise, especially visible minorities from developing countries (Hathiyani 2008). A Conference Board (2004) briefing report, entitled “The Voices of Visible Minorities: Speaking Out on Breaking down Barriers”, reviewed seven focus group discussions with some well-to-do immigrant and Canadian-born executives and experts. Contributors in the Conference Board’s focus groups reported that businesses in Canada have standardized a use of a two-faced, deceitful term like "lack of fit" to eliminate gifted visible minorities from higher positions. While, immigrants of colour face particularly daunting, albeit often unspoken, barriers in the process of achieving career success that goes way beyond psychometric counseling strategies. However, many immigrants in Canada felt that speaking

with an accent or possessing a foreign credential is often used by employers as an excuse to screen them out of job competitions. As a consequence, many talented immigrants are routinely prevented from working in their fields, even in professions where labour shortages already exist.

One might guess that because the federal government is in charge of selecting immigrants on the grounds of their professional qualifications, it might also be responsible for the supervision of their assimilation. However, existing research indicates that foreign skilled immigrants' settlement process quickly becomes stalled in bureaucratic red tape, as the federal government relinquishes the undertaking to provincial jurisdictions, which on the other hand transfer new immigrants to their individual professional regulatory bodies. This has and continues to create a situation where scores of foreign professional immigrants are subjected to complex licensing exams or lengthy phases of retraining within the Canadian market before they are accredited and certified.

In this compound muddle of power, Shakir and McIsaac (2001) note that agitating exclusively for right of entry to professions and employment means exposing oneself across the jurisdictional abyss that you risk becoming uneducated. In addition, they stress that navigating specifically within each profession and business entails an elevated height of specialization and skillfulness to cope with the diverse so-called jurisdictional "stakeholders" within. They further go on to stress how professional immigrants' great effort to have their credentials recognized/accredited is seriously destabilized by media reports; which is mostly based on second-hand or unreliable sources that reflects only on the strange, depressing immigrant's story, rather than involving in a constructive examination of the systemic problem.

The low valuation of foreign credentials together with the demand for Canadian experience cannot be separated from the ethno-racial dimension of disparity. European and American credentials are easily translatable because they are part of the dominant “white-stream” culture. Furthermore, as Keung (2005) observed, visible minority immigrants who are forced to compete for unskilled jobs are shaped negatively in public perception, which in turn takes the onus off the government who responds with cutbacks while skilled jobs go unfilled. Finally, even those visible minority immigrant women and men who have “made it” continue to feel undervalued and underappreciated, looked down upon by the dominant segment that upholds the norms and practices of much of the white middle class in the society (Fleras and Elliott 1999, p.276).

While research in the past have acknowledged a lack of Canadian experience as the most common barrier for newcomers looking for meaningful employment in Canada (Statistics Canada 2003), recent research seems also to be in conjunction with past findings. For example, in 2012, the OHRC did a public survey on requirements for Canadian experience in the employment sector. This includes employers, government and regulatory bodies as well as agencies serving newcomers. The survey findings showed that newcomers face Canadian experience requirements from employers at the job search. Newcomers also face these barriers when they try to get professional certification, as many regulatory bodies will not admit new members without previous work experience in Canada. Thus compelling the OHRC to conclude that, a strict requirement for “Canadian experience” is *prima-facie* discrimination.

([www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca))

As an effort to addressing the issue of discrimination with regards to lack of Canadian experience in Ontario workplace, The Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the *Code*) states that “it is a

public policy in Ontario to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every person and to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. The *Code* aims to create a climate of understanding and mutual respect, so that each person feels that they belong in the community and can contribute to it.” ([www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca))

*Section 5 of the Code states that “every person in Ontario has a right to be free from discrimination in employment based on race, ancestry, colour, place of origin and ethnic origin. People should not experience barriers to employment based on characteristics that are associated with any of these grounds.”* ([www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca))

*Section 6 of the Code states that “every person in Ontario has a right to be free from discrimination with respect to membership in any trade or occupational association or self-governing profession based on race, ancestry, colour, place of origin and ethnic origin. Therefore, the bodies that govern regulated professions and compulsory trades should avoid using membership or licensing criteria that could discriminate against people based on these grounds.”* ([www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca))

*Section 11 states that, “discrimination under the Code can be direct: for example, an employer may refuse to grant a job to someone because of prejudices related to the person’s place of origin. But the Code also prohibits discrimination that results from requirements, qualifications or factors that may appear neutral but which have a negative effect on people identified by the Code. This is often called “adverse effect” or “constructive” discrimination.* ([www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca))

In line with the above, a number of “best practices” have been put into place to make sure that organization, employers, unions, regulatory bodies, governments at all levels, social service

agencies serving newcomers and newcomers themselves are in compliance with the human rights *Code* and principles. These stakeholders are expected as contained in the 2012 publication of the *Special Programs and the Ontario Human Rights Code: A Self-Help Guide* to:

- i. Examine their organizations as a whole to identify potential barriers for newcomers; address any barriers through organizational change initiatives, such as by forming new organizational structures, removing old practices or policies that give rise to human rights concerns, using more objective, transparent processes, and focusing on more inclusive styles of leadership and decision-making.
- ii. Review job requirements and descriptions, recruitment/hiring practices and accreditation criteria to make sure they do not present barriers for newcomer applicants.
- iii. Give an applicant the opportunity to prove his/her qualifications through paid internships, short contracts or positions with probationary periods.
- iv. Provide newcomers with on-the-job training, supports and resources that will enable them to close “skill gaps” (*i.e.* acquire any skills or knowledge they may be lacking).
- v. Use competency-based methods to assess an applicant’s skill and ability to do the job
- vi. Frame job qualifications or criteria in terms of competencies and job-related knowledge and skills.
- vii. Support initiatives designed to empower newcomers inside and outside of their organizations (for example, formal mentoring arrangements, internships, networking opportunities, other types of bridging programs, language training, *etc.*).



- viii. Monitor the diversity ratios of new recruits to make sure they reflect the diversity of competent applicants overall.
- ix. Implement special programs, corrective measures or outreach initiatives to address inequity or disadvantage affecting newcomers.
- x. Supply newcomers and social service agencies serving newcomers with information about workplace norms, and expectations and opportunities within the organization. .
- xi. Provide all staff with mandatory education and training on human rights and cultural competence.

While most organizations have modified their organizational structures and policy to abide by the requirements specified in the human right codes, the reality is that most employment applications for jobs within most employment organizations still have provisions for educational history, employment history as well as references from previous employers. This would appear that employers are more likely to ask about Canadian experience in more subtle ways--for example, through in-person interviews, or through recruitment agencies. In addition, employers may not honour a resume that lacks evidence of Canadian experience, without the job applicant ever knowing the reason why he or she was never contacted for the position.

### ***5.5: Language Proficiency***

Language proficiency is also a personal barrier that is strongly and definitely related to the employment prospects of immigrants within Canadian society. Scassa (1994) argues that immigrants encounter discrimination in employment on the basis of their language. The inability on the part of some foreign professional immigrants to communicate in the English or French

languages represent, a vital constrain that hinders the accreditation of their credentials as well as their integration process. This revolves around the idea that all foreign trained professionals are required to meet language proficiency requirements in addition to academic and professional requirements so that they can function effectively in their respective lines of work. According to the Canadian language proficiency requirements criteria, applicants are awarded 28 points based on their proficiency in Canada's two official languages. A maximum of 24 points are awarded for proficiency in a first language (English), and 4 are awarded for a second language (French). These points are determined according to standard language benchmark tests, which are administered by a designated language testing organization. According to language benchmark stipulations, "An individual who intends to apply for Canada Federal Skilled Worker Quota should be proficient in reading, writing, speaking and listening; and must fall within the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 7 level for English language or Niveau de compétence linguistique canadien (NCLC) 7 in French language. If an individual can secure either of these two, he or she is eligible for Canada Federal Skilled Worker"

(<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/factor-language.asp>; Ahmad 2013)

Language proficiency is constantly and completely connected with higher salary returns. Immigrants who could not speak English reported incomes of nine percent lower than those of their peers who could speak English fluently (Aydemir & Skuterud 2004, p.11). Research findings indicate that immigrants who arrive in Canada knowing an official language are more likely to succeed in the Canadian labour market. Bonikowska, Green & Riddell (2008), in their contribution, revealed that immigrants who had their educational experience in Canada generally had better-quality of language proficiency, as well as higher wages, than immigrants who had their educational experience in their country of origin. As Bonikowska, Hou & Picot (2011)

emphasize, language proficiency has been identified as one of the reasons for income disparity between immigrants and domestic born Canadian.

In a further review of studies on the relationship between immigrants' second language acquisition and labour market performance, DeVoretz et al. (2000) found that "proficiency in one or both of Canada's official languages has a consistently positive effect on both immigrant earnings and employment opportunities" and, moreover, that "the rates of return from second language acquisition are large" (DeVoretz et al. 2000, p.48). In addition, as Chiswick and Miller (2000) point out, "Destination language proficiency can have indirect impacts on labor market earnings through the effect on the productivity of other forms of human capital such as schooling and labor market experience" (Chiswick and Miller 2000, p.4). However, research also found out that the relationship between language proficiency and annual earnings is not strictly linear. For example, Chiswick and Miller (2000), note that there are differences in earnings even among those immigrants who can conduct a conversation in an official language. More specifically, immigrants who can conduct a conversation in an official language and generally use an official language at home earn more than those immigrants who can conduct a conversation in an official language but generally use a non-official language at home. While some might question the validation of the aforementioned lines, experience reveals that the issue of accents comes into play when conversation relating to language proficiency is been discussed. Practically, the sound-bites that 'You have an accent or you speak with an accent'; is an indication that you do not belong or fall within the mainstream group that is generally recognized for language fluency. Though not overtly displayed, most accreditation evaluators as well as employers tap into the issue of language proficiency and accent as justification to subject professional immigrants mostly from third world countries to more stressful screening. Despite the aforesaid

circumstances, most researchers still support a selection system based primarily on official language proficiency, as it is agreed among the accreditation agencies that this is the single best predictor of future economic success in Canada. By setting the pass mark then at 75 points but now 67 points, the selection criteria for the Skilled Worker Class virtually excludes those applicants with limited or no proficiency in an official language (see Hiebert, 2002).

Nonetheless, Pendakur and Pendakur (1997) have shown that knowledge of an official language is not always a guarantee of economic equivalence. Their research indicates that “knowledge of minority languages is correlated with lower earnings for men and women in Canada’s three largest cities- Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver” even when knowledge of an official language is held constant (Pendakur and Pendakur 1997, p.16). In addition, immigrants who speak both an official and a non-official language tend to earn less than those who speak only an official language, although this negative return diminishes as the local linguistic population grows. Furthermore Li (2001) for example, emphasized that immigrants with a university degree, and who are unilingual in English or bilingual in English and French, had the highest earnings. They are followed by those unilingual in French, while immigrants who spoke neither official language had the largest earning disadvantage.

Further research studies indicate that between the mid-1980s and the year 2005, immigrants with equivalent Canadian university degree earned 25 percent less than native born Canadian with Canadian university degree (Palameta 2007, & Gilmore & LePetit 2008). Though the society has evolved the income gap between native born and immigrants within Canadian society continue to widen. Pendakur and Pendakur argue that the negative return on non-official language proficiency is a result of discrimination/biases within the Canadian labour market, which may be based on culture as much as on colour, and that large enclaves of linguistic groups

may minimize this discrimination by sensitizing the population to intonation and other cultural artifacts. Even when immigrants are able to speak in the two official languages, speaking with an accent becomes another major issue associated with the issue of language proficiency. Many immigrants felt that in Canada speaking with an accent is often used by employers as an excuse to screen them out of job competitions.

Personal experience reveals that speaking with accent within the realm of Canadian society generates a kind of intuition that signifies that one is not originally from Canada. For example, phrases like ‘You have an accent’, ‘your accent is so deep’, ‘where are you from’, ‘where or what is your background’, ‘you are not from here’ ‘How long have you been in Canada’ are some of talking points that are associated with the issue of accent. And this has directly or indirectly affected the ways in which immigrants are been represented or misrepresented within the scope of Canadian society and employment industries as well. Technically, these phrases represent a kind of discriminatory/bias misconception in relation to how minority groups are been perceived within Canadian society.

Though not overtly displayed, personal experience further indicates that the issue of accent sometimes impacts the ways in which recruitment as well succession processes are been conducted within most Canadian employment industries. Therefore, language proficiency is firmly and absolutely linked to the employment prospects of immigrants. The lack of language proficiency leads to further struggle since many found it difficult to find even low-skilled employment—most available jobs are based on part-time temporary and short-term contract employment (Brunner, Hyndman, & Friesen 2011). Consequently, Akbari (2011, p.140-1) stressed that a lack of language proficiency in the principal language of a country can be a considerable obstacle for labour market accomplishment.

### ***5.6: Country of Origin:***

Technically, when the issue of migration/immigration is being discussed in its entirety, what always come to mind is the country of origin as well as the country of destination (i.e. the sending as well as the receiving countries) Based on this general notion or impression, the country of origin becomes an integral part to the issue relating to foreign credentials evaluation as well as accreditation.

The various barriers that have been discussed above in relation to foreign professionals credentials evaluation and accreditation be it the structural barriers – (the quality of immigrants education, lack of consistency in evaluation processes, discrimination) or personal barriers-(lack of Canadian experience, lack of language proficiency); all narrows down to the country where immigrants obtained their credentials.

The issue of country of origin with regards to migration/immigration to Canada is not an isolated case. It has and continues to be an essential tool that has been used to determine the type of people that are needed into the country. Historically, with reference to the nature of Canadian immigration policy discussed in section one of this thesis, immigrants were once classified into “Preferred and Non-preferred” categories.

From the Confederation of Canada in 1867 to the 1960s, the selection of immigrants to Canada was based on racial background, with British and Western Europeans being recognized as the most ‘desirable’ citizens, while Asians and Africans were considered ‘un-assimilable’ and therefore ‘undesirable’ (Knowles, 1997). These terminology were used to determine what type of immigrants were needed, from which country as well as how they would be treated and accommodated within the then Canadian society.

Today, the same mentality still resonates within almost all walks of life within Canadian society. Research studies as reveal in the classification of race section of this paper indicates that, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, people of the world were classified into different types of genealogical lines. From then till now, people of the world has and continue to be classified or categorized according to their physical as well as their geographical nomenclature. (Banton 1987, p.33) Winant (1994), in his contribution contends that “race has become an enduring, deeply sedimented means of knowing and organizing the social world ... subject to continual contestation and reinterpretation” (Winant 1994, p. xiii) While there are some research scholars who might not agree with the suggestions or positions of both Banton and Winant on one hand. On the other hand, there is without a doubt that, there are many who would not hesitation to say that race influence is today felt in every nook and cranny of the globe.

The country of origin has much to do with how an immigrant’ credentials are recognized in Canada. The country of origin surfaced as the most significant factor affecting the ability of immigrants from countries of the Global South to find employment that is commensurate to their areas of professional disciplines and competence. But when it comes to immigrants from Western Europe and the USA, there are no hindrances. The above state of affairs tend to speak to the obvious fact that, the faith of immigrants to Canada are been judged based on the political as well as socio-economic situation or circumstances in the country immigrants comes from. While it is a fact that the political and socio-economic situation in most third world countries are not in good standing, it is somehow unrealistic on the part of most western countries to homogeneously deal with issues relating to immigrants from third world countries. Immigrants from those countries regarded as developing, or third world or Global South as is presently called, are represented in public, academic as well media discuss as if they originated from the same

country. Issues relating to Immigrants from those countries have and continue to be represented and misrepresented in the western world in a generalized fashion.

In regards to the above, Hawthorne (2007) indicates that, “ it is worth noting that the latest available global rankings suggest a major gulf between the caliber of tertiary institutions in ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ nations, correlated with length of academic tradition and availability of resources” (Hawthorne 2007, p.30). Hence, the devaluation or discounting of foreign professional credentials has been, and is, influenced by the nature of the political economic differences between the sending country and the receiving country.

### ***5.7: Summary Statement for Chapter 2***

Entrenched in Canada’s immigration policies of the past and present, the perception of *immigrant* in a social and political context is based on the principle of “Us vs. Them” (Li, 2003; Ng, 1986). Off-springs of early European migrants, now long-time Canadians, no longer consider themselves ‘immigrants’. These days, the term *immigrant* is systematically manipulated (codified) to mean people of colour who come from different racial and cultural backgrounds, who do not speak fluent English, and who work in lower level jobs (Li, 2003). In other words, the codification of ‘immigrant’ uses skin colour as the basis for social marking. Justifiable and actual differentiations are suspected to be inconsistent with the cultural and social structure of the conventional Canadian society, and as such immigrants are consequently regarded unwelcome.

The non-recognition of immigrants’ foreign academic credentials, training and job experience from their home countries continue to represent a major challenge to professional immigrants’ employment prospects and integration process in Canada. Even though there is evidence that the introduction of the point system in the immigration policy was designed to



eliminate the exclusion of immigrants based on their sex and race, nevertheless there are still biases that are not as overt as before in the present day immigration policy.

So, while it is sometimes difficult to separate individual factors from structural factors, ethno-racial stratification does need to be examined vigorously. In the end, we live in a world where the dynamics of personal enterprise and social outcomes are filtered primarily through a coloured lens, which is not always responsive to individual skills, aptitudes, values, personality traits and/or interests. By contrast, objective research consistently reveals that a commitment to social justice has to recognize the need for collective over individual initiative when the situation demands. It also endorses the principle of social intervention for true equality. The process of foreign credential recognition is hampered by the following major barriers: poor information on the accreditation process; lack of a responsible, coordinated approach for the evaluation of foreign credentials; and lack of agreed-upon national standards, discrimination, lack of Canadian experience, lack of language proficiency, as well as country of origin. These barriers mean that seeking accreditation in Canada requires undertaking a personal journey involving complex interactions with multiple stake holders.

## ***6. CHAPTER (3): The Impact of Non-Recognition of Foreign Credentials on Canadian Society and the Professional Skilled Immigrants***

As specified in the introductory section of this thesis, this chapter reflects on the after effects that non-recognition of foreign skilled immigrants credentials have on Canadian society, as well as the effects on the psycho-social state of the immigrants themselves.

### ***6.1: The Impact of Credentials Devaluation on Canadian society***

We have already established that for various reasons other foreign educational credentials are highly discounted and devaluated in Canada. Understanding the antecedents for the lower evaluation of immigrants' credentials has important implications for the Canadian economy as well as the psycho-social well-being of immigrants. The non-recognition of foreign trained professional credentials has both positive and negative implications on the Canadian economy and the society as a whole.

The luring of foreign professional immigrants seems to be beneficial to Canadian society in the sense that it helps in the population growth of Canada society. This revolves around the fact that the declining birth rates and the rapidly aging population are diminishing the size of Canada's labor force. Li (1996) argues that Canada has a low birth rate and an aging population, which simultaneously generate a high dependency ratio and low population growth. In addition, statistical projection indicates that for the next several decades Canada will face two demographic conditions that would structure the social problem that is associated with reducing immigrant skills. First, the population growth rate has slowed to an all-time low; the country's population reached 30,007,094 in 2001, representing a 4-per-cent increase since the 1996 census, which matches the lowest five-year growth rate in Canadian history. In light of this census data,

statisticians forecast that without increased immigration the population will stop growing entirely. In fact, just to stand still in terms of population, we are going to have to increase our immigration every year, because Canada's fertility rate is just 1.5 children (the average number of children a woman will have over her lifetime), well below the rate of 2.1 children per woman needed to sustain the current population. Over several decades ago, the average Canadian woman had four children over her lifetime. Today, approximately half of Canada's current population growth comes from immigration. However, given the decline of domestic birth rates, statistical projection further stipulates that by 2026 newcomers will likely be responsible for all the growth in Canada's labour force as well as the country's overall population.

The second progressive demographic concern is the aging of Canada's population. Again, if current trends continue there will be relatively few people of working age to support relatively greater numbers of retired people. Projections indicate that the proportion of the total population of the country 65 years and older will have increased from 8.7 percent in 1976 to 20.2 percent in 2031. If left unchecked, these two demographic processes could have dire social and economic consequences in Canada. The resulting effect emanating from the demographic concern could lead to a capital accumulation and wage crisis; strain on the welfare state; a declining tax base; and increased expenditures on the elderly (Myles and Boyd, 1982; Satzewich, 2000).

Analysts suggest that by 2020, one million Canadian jobs could go unoccupied. As a result, immigration is being seen, increasingly, as necessary for economic growth and well-being. The continued presence of immigrants, especially educated ones, serves as means or avenue to offset this aging segment of country's population.

According to Statistics Canada, as of July 2012, the Canadian population was estimated to be 34,880,500 (Statistics Canada, 2012). In addition, CIC in its statistical press release in 2013 reveals that, “approximately 257,515 persons were admitted to Canada for permanent residence in 2012. Of those, approximately 160,617 were admitted as economic class immigrants and their dependents, 64,901 as family class immigrants, 23,056 as refugees, and 8,936 in other immigrant categories. The preliminary 2012 data as contained in the press release indicates further that “for the seventh consecutive year, Canada continued the highest sustained level of immigration in Canadian history.” (News Release 2013)

Furthermore, the influx of professional trained immigrants into Canada to do menial jobs due to devaluation or non-recognition of their credentials seems to be beneficial also to Canadian society in the sense that it makes almost every segment of the society literate and more knowledgeable. This speaks to the obvious fact that when you look at what is going on within the Canadian employment market be it government or private enterprise, there is the demand by almost every segment of the Canadian work force on the need on the part of immigrants to have at least a Canadian grade twelve and the ability to speak English as a requirement for employment. This is even more obvious for less skilled or menial jobs that does not need educational requirement in the past. For example, to get a job as a transit operator within the Toronto Transit Commission, as part of a recent development, you need a Canadian grade twelve, the ability to communicate in English language and the willingness to take an aptitude test. Hitherto, those requirements were not strictly emphasized. Furthermore, when people especially immigrants goes to employment agencies for factory jobs, one’s level of education as well as one’s ability to speak English are some of the vital criteria needed in the process of considering an intended applicant request.

In terms of the strict economics of the situation, if the immigrant labor force is under-utilized, the Canadian economy incurs opportunity losses. The cost of not fully using immigrants' skills has been estimated "from \$2.4 to \$5.9 billion in lost income annually" (FCRD 2008: 15). This means that even though Canada draws the best from other countries, but it does not use the talent of immigrants very effectively. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that over 500,000 professional migrants would earn an extra \$4.1 to \$5.9 billion annually if both their experiences and credentials were recognized (Committee on Citizenship and Immigration 2003). Similarly, studies collected by the World Education Services (WES) which is a not-for-profit organization that produces evaluations of foreign degrees and diplomas, show comparable annual income losses in the \$5 billion range for underemployed immigrants in Canada, which would generate \$1.5 billion in income taxes, assuming a 30 per cent tax rate. Additionally, the World Education Services (WES) determined that more than 75 per cent of foreign credentials it evaluated in 2003 in engineering, health care and IT matched or exceeded Canadian standards (World Education Services (<http://www.wes.org>)).

Against the backdrop of the potential social and capital accumulation issues associated with declining fertility and population aging, comprehensive policy strategies in the area of immigration and immigrant accreditation barriers are vital to Canada in keeping pace with the new market challenges set by the changing and dynamic domestic and global economy.

As indicated by Papademetriou and Martin (1991) in one of the sections above, migration-development link usually revolves around recruitment, remittances, and return. While the issue pertaining to recruitment has been discussed in previous section, immigrant remittances are also an aspect that is of symbolic importance to the issue of immigration integration/assimilation settlement within Canada. Existing studies have indicated that

Immigration/immigrants have contributed to the political, economic, and social/cultural development of Canada. It also has helped in making Canada one of the most successful and diverse countries among the developed countries of the world.

Yet, despite the enormous benefits, when the issue of allowing immigrants into the country is been raised and discussed within Canadian society, there has always been from history up on till now, the media sound bites that tends to generate negative misrepresentations that the presence of immigrants are dangerous to Canadian society [One such person is Margaret Wente]. The role of the Toronto Mail and the Empire newspaper as far back 1899 thus resulted in the promulgation of aggressive Immigration legislation to combat the inflow of immigrants into the country (Avery, 1995).

Basically, the presence of immigrants to Canadian shores has always been met with negative attitudes. For example, the immigrants from Ukraine during the early days of Canadian historical development were then accused that their enclave style of settlement was not beneficial to the rest of Canada. The Chinese were accused also in Canadian history of not contributing towards the development of the country due to the fact that they were sending their earnings back to their home land in china. This situation as we know in Canadian history led to the introduction of the Chinese head tax on the Chinese immigrants by the then Canadian government (Avery, 1995). Since then and up till now, such societal impression has been transferred toward immigrants from outside of the original European block. While this issue of immigrant remittance is a thing of major concern for most developed countries like Canada; the reality of fact though it might be subject to denial or contestation is that existing literature have and continued to indicate that immigrants earnings in Canada is and have been affected by the non-recognition or devaluation of their credentials. Hence, arguments relating to the non-recognition

or devaluation of skilled professional immigrants in Canada could be linked to a systemic attempt on the part of the Canadian credentials evaluators to limit or suppress immigrants' remittances based on past historical pattern.

Contrary to the above, transnational remittances to developing countries have significantly increased over the past decade, both globally and locally. An official World Bank report indicated that remittance flows to developing countries were estimated to reach \$406bn in 2012 with Nigeria topping the list of recipients in Africa with \$21bn (N3.28tn) fifth in the world following India (\$71 billion), China (\$60 billion) Philippines (\$26 billion) and Mexico (\$22 billion) (World Bank 2013). Amid a backdrop of decline in the level of remittances recorded in 2014 and 2015 following the weak global economic growth due to low oil prices and Anti-money laundering efforts; World Bank report in 2016 indicates that remittances to developing countries increase slightly by 0.8 percent to \$442 billion. The report further projected that the global growth of remittances to developing countries would remain modest at about 3.5 percent over the next two years. (World Bank, 2016)

While the World Bank has envisaged more inflow of remittances into most the developing countries, many of these developing countries do not have existing policies in place to regulate its uses for national development, apart from the usual consumption for the remittances of recipient households. Because poverty, unemployment and inequality are still prevalent in most of the developing countries, the luring of skilled professionals from these developing countries into Canada and then rendering their qualifications obsolete, further compounds the development of these developing countries. Attracting the best human resources in these countries and making them redundant in their country of destination is not good for neither the immigrant/sending countries or the immigrant themselves.

## ***6.2 : The Impact of Credentials Dévaluation on the Well-Being of Immigrants :***

The potential under-utilization of immigrant employees and the consequential effect on their well-being can pose significant threats to social cohesion in Canada. If immigrants cannot be integrated into the labor force because of the lower quality of their credentials or because of subtle biases, their economic and psychological well-being suffers. Immigrants' perceptions of integration and success in their jobs play a significant role in their psychological well-being and productivity (Major & O'Brien, 2004). Research studies reveals that unemployment puts people at an elevated risk for emotional and physical problems (Price, Choi, & Vinokur, 2002), as well as additional strains because of relocation and adjustment difficulties (Akhavan, Bildt, Franzen, & Wamala, 2004).

While the attraction and integration of skilled professionals and tradespersons to Canada are acknowledged to be central to the success of national development, this objective continues to be jeopardized by the many barriers faced by foreign-trained immigrants in having their skills and credentials recognized. The fact is that nearly over 40,000 highly skilled immigrants have arrived in Ontario in each of the past 10 years, yet many immigrants with PhDs have been left driving cabs or hustling pizzas, as opposed to being gainfully employment in their chosen vocations.

From an immigrant and personal observational point of view, legal or illegal immigrants/immigration into any country within the globe are seen as a threat to the political as well as the socio-economic composition of that particular country be it developed or developing country. And as such immigration issues are meant with resistance from various stakeholders



within a country while undermining the positive contributions of immigration to the benefits of that particular country.

Based on the popular saying that “there is no place like home,” migration as previously indicated in one of the sections above is motivated either by the ‘push or pull’ factors in both the sending as well as the receiving countries. However, leaving one’s homeland for a foreign land or country is on one hand, beset with feelings or experiences that are characterized by nostalgia, feelings of uncertainty, feelings of fear of the unknown, and feelings of regret. On the other hand, there are the feelings of great expectations, anxiety, of hope, as well as of a better life. These are some of the feelings/thoughts that most immigrants’ carry along with them as they leave their home land or country of origin. The realization and actualization of these feelings/thoughts depends on the situation they find themselves in their country of destination.

So far most foreign professional immigrants’ who leaves their home land to come to Canada, carries along with them that feelings or thoughts of hope and great expectation. One could imagine how the feelings would look like when the tools for these immigrants to realize their hopes and expectations are been dashed away with their credentials not recognized or devalued by the Canadian credentials evaluators.

Most of these immigrants find themselves stuck in the country of their destination. They cannot go back to their country because; most of them have relinquished all their assets and possessions in their country hoping for a better life in their country of destination. Most of them sold their properties, cars, other valuable belongings, as well as leaving well-paying job based on the local standard to come to Canada. Most of these foreign professionals’ immigrants when they come to Canada especially those from third world or developing countries, they find themselves

in a situation of hopelessness, utmost disappointments, confusion and regrets because their credentials are not recognized or given equal status or equivalency to the Canadian degree.

Hence, the devaluation of immigrants' human capital in terms of formal education has been considered as one of the major factors that influence immigrants' earnings in the Canadian labour market. Statistics Canada's (2004) census study reflecting on the characteristics and experiences of recent immigrants residing in Canada's metropolitan areas in terms of the settlement patterns and the labour market experiences and earnings reveals that about 1.8 million of all immigrants coming to Canada in the 1990s have settled in one of Canada's 27 census metropolitan areas. These immigrants generally also have higher levels of educational attainment than people born in Canada. Yet, in virtually every urban regions a far higher proportion of recent immigrants were employed in jobs with lower skill requirements than the Canadian-born. In addition, recent immigrants were less likely to be employed in occupations typically requiring a university degree. In fact, recent immigrants with a university degree were much more likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to be working in occupations that typically require no formal education. Finally, in most urban centre, recent immigrants were at least twice as likely as Canadian-born workers to earn less than \$20,000 a year. They were also much less likely to have high earnings, that is, more than \$100,000 a year. This reinforces the findings of previous labour force studies showing that recent immigrants were much more likely to work for low wages, were less likely to be high-wage earners and had higher unemployment rates (Statistics Canada, August 2004).

In 2001, the unemployment rate among recent immigrants was 1.5 times that of the Canadian- born unemployment rate (11.4% compared with 7.4%). As education levels increase, the relative difference between the unemployment rates of immigrants and the Canadian-born

also increases. Considering the recent rate of immigrants with a bachelor's degree; they have unemployment rates that are three times greater than Canadian-born degree holders (11.8% compared with 3.9%). The highest ratios occur among recent immigrants who earned Master's Degrees or Doctorates; their unemployment rates are more than 3.5 times higher than Canadian-born with graduate level degrees. Even though the demand for post-secondary credentials appears to be high, recent immigrants with university education have roughly the same rate of unemployment as those immigrants who did not complete high school (The Canadian Labour and Business Centre 2004; Challinor 2011 ).

The above evidence supports the contention that barriers in Canada confronting foreign-trained individuals are not only an abominable waste of talent, but are also strongly influenced by variables of ethnic origin, ancestry, race, colour and/or gender; and so constitute systemic discrimination. Such discrimination is not only against the law under both the governing provincial/territorial/federal human right legislation and under section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Right and Freedoms, but also leads to debilitating societal costs of both an economic and a non-economic nature, such as: slower movement of professional services, community frustration, weaker immigrant integration, human rights complaints, as well as macro-economic costs. All of these societal costs have direct impacts on productivity levels as well as on societal cohesion.

Meanwhile, in the context of Canadian multiculturalism and increasing urbanized ethno-racial diversity, the groups most adversely affected by skills underutilization are composed primarily by people of colour. A 2001 report by the National Anti-Racism Council entitled, "The Two Faces of Canada," notes that "racially visible persons born in Canada earn almost 30% less on average than other native born persons. ... racially visible persons, native-born or not, are

better educated than the native-born White population, they are underemployed to a disturbing degree, creating a large pool of highly qualified labour, ripe for exploitation ... [and] the cost of the low participation of racially visible persons in the Canadian workforce is \$55 billion” (NARC, 2001). Smith and Jackson (2002)& Balakrishnan and Hou (2004), note that, there is an increasing evidence that visible minority immigrants are at a greater risk than non-visible minority immigrants in their experience of higher underemployment and unemployment levels and lower income returns due to the non-recognition of their credentials. One explanatory reason for this tends to revolve around the fact that, the groups that are targeted for non- recognition as well as non-accreditation are for the most part unexplainably non-Western and subsequently non-White (Simmons 1998; Sharief 2005). The resulting outcome of the above situation has not only had significant economic effects on racialized immigrant professionals, but has taken a psychological toll as well in terms of the erosion of skill, loss of self-esteem, increased tensions both within and outside the alienated community (Brouwer 1999).

### ***Recommendations:***

In view of the above, anti-racism activists and sociological researchers have continued in the process of trying to re-think Canadian society and global-international migration in terms of ethno-racial reality. This includes the perspective of men and women who have been racialized, as well as the other political economy stakeholders such as governments, regulating bodies, employers-associations-unions, educational institutions and academic credential assessment servers.

Culminating with Ontario's 1989 ACCESS! Report and the 1997 federal government “Not Just Numbers Report”, all reputable structurally-oriented research now seem to agree on the

acknowledged barriers faced by foreign-trained immigrants in having their skills and credentials recognized - including the various rules of the provincial bodies which regulate access to professions and trades through licensing and registration requirements, the requirements of education institutions and the hiring and promotion rules of employers. The report concludes that the current problem is not so much identifying the barriers, but rather establishing effective strategies for their elimination.

The 1989 Access! Task Force Report (1989) also looks at whether the Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to licensing bodies. It reviews of admissions criteria, appeal requirements and additional examinations for internationally trained candidates concluded that the Charter may apply if the licensing practices are found to be discriminatory. The report acknowledged that it is the primary obligation of occupational bodies to protect the public interest with respect to health, safety, and welfare. However, in fulfilling this obligation, the bodies must also consider the duty to respect an individual's right to equality of opportunity and to equal treatment without unreasonable discrimination. The report goes on to review the barriers to entry which included the following,

- Lack of clear information about professional standards and registration requirements
- Problems getting academic qualifications and experience recognized
- Registration exams may not give a full or fair reflection of individuals' actual knowledge and skills
- Language tests may not test the skills actually required to practice the occupation
- Lack of upgrading and bridge training opportunities

- Lack of internal appeal mechanisms

According to the ACCESS report, the assessment of equivalency is the stage that is the least standardized and most difficult for applicants. It recommended a Prior Learning Assessment Network (PLAN) to address the problems in assessing equivalency. The PLAN proposal was recommended as a move away from a certificate-based system toward a competency-based system.

In addition, Alboim (2005), for example, explores the social implications related to under-utilization of immigrant skills at the individual, ethno-racial and societal level for the purpose of improving the design and conduct of public policy. In conjunction with prior research, she found that when large numbers of visible immigrants have blocked entry to trades or professions, there is an accumulated societal effect of higher levels of inter-group tensions, individual and collective alienation, as well as generalized perceptions of ‘institutional’ discrimination. From a public policy perspective, Alboim recommends that we should begin a public discourse by talking beyond “competency assessment” to “qualifications recognition,” in a collective bid to solving the problem and formulating workable strategies for implementing a national action plan.

In this connection, Alboim disclosed a (Maytree Foundation) ten-point action plan aimed at some concrete proposal that could be implemented by the New Ontario government as well as by governments in other provinces that will allow these jurisdictions to integrate immigrant skills into the Canadian economy. These proposals include

1. Creating an (Ontario) Internet portal of information for skilled immigrants

2. Improving cooperation and group-work on the assessment of academic credentials to increase employer confidence.
3. Provision of incentives for educational institutions and licensing bodies to develop competency based assessment tools.
4. Revision of post-secondary funding *modus operandi* and the legal structure so educational institutions are encouraged to provide bridging programs as part of their "mainstream" services.
5. Working with the federal government to expand student loan programs.
6. Funding of labour market language training to be delivered by employers and educational institutions.
7. Providing incentives to employers, employer associations, and labour to become more active in the integration of immigrant skills.
8. Sustaining the collaborative efforts of Ontario self-regulated professions to improve access for international candidates.
9. Initiating multi-lateral discussions to create 5-party agreements on the labour market integration of immigrants [including governments, regulating bodies, employers-associations- unions, educational institutions and academic credential assessment servers]; and
10. Supporting local initiatives to integrate immigrant skills.

Subsequent analysis into the problem in assessing equivalency has built on this recommendation. In the medical profession, for example, Joan Atlin, Executive Director, Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, has emphasized the importance of focusing on the doctor shortage in Ontario through a lens of competence and a lens of rights –

human rights and the Charter of Rights. The question is, as Atlin puts it – Why is medical licensure a right for Canadians and a privilege for internationally trained physicians? (Second Annual Law and Diversity Conference, 2004; see also Foster 2006)

At present, internationally trained physicians have to compete with each other for the limited assessment and training positions available, and only about 10 to 15 percent of the talent pool find a placement. At the end of the process, those who do succeed in obtaining a licence to practice also have to fulfill a five-year return of service contract with the government. This means that the present licensure system is creating two classes of Canadians – one class with full access and the other class who have to compromise and compete before they can gain access to the steps to prove competency. So, according to Atlin (2004) Canada's doctor shortage is not only a regulatory and assessment problem but an equity problem as well, that requires a "paradigm shift" to eliminate the double standards that are embedded in the medical profession and society.

Internationally trained physicians are "treated like labour market commodities and not like citizens with equality rights." Thus, the possibility of a self-sufficient system that can provide adequate service to all Ontarians and Canadians lies precisely in organizing social policy principles around equity and fair practice, actualizing our already existing human resources (Second Annual Law and Diversity Conference 2004).

The Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario has recently taken steps toward tackling our well-known health-care problem, and has forwarded recommendations to the health ministry proposing a new assessment program for foreign-trained physicians. The new program which will be in operational at the province's five medical schools includes a new



“fast-tracking process” that is attached with other state initiatives like "location incentives" for under-serviced areas and “medical school tuition subsidies.”

However, from the viewpoint of internationally trained physicians, Atlin (2004) proposed a new “equity rights” that focused (1) on an adequate number of training opportunities, and (2) on competencies that reflect clear and concise criteria and apply the same standards to all. In this perspective, anybody who can perform to the standard that is accepted by society should have an opportunity to practice medicine. Atlin (2004) notes that for many internationally trained physicians; this was the working assumption about this country before they emigrated. It was only after their arrival that they realized that they had been deceived and abandoned (Second Annual Law and Diversity Conference 2004).

Seeing the issue of immigrant skills utilization through the lens of equity rights as well as the lens of competencies, a systemic solution for vulnerable immigrants that goes beyond such things as an informal individual complaints processes, or even rules-tinkering by self-governing professional organizations or state officials should and must be followed. Some sociologists maintained that the removal of overt and covert systemic barriers in a way that preserves human rights and professional standards would involve the implementation of programs like a “licensing equity plan” by regulatory and licensing bodies and/or the implementation of an “employment equity plan” by employers, under the coherent supervision of the state's immigration program and a national immigrant-settlement policy (Foster 1998)

While there is remarkable call for a formal, fair and consistent policy on accreditation that is extended to all areas of the economy, the Prior Learning Assessment Network (PLAN) as well as the May-Tree Foundation national action plan are examples of a holistic and dynamic

approach to the contemporary social problem relating to foreign accreditation barriers that emphasizes both skills utilization and fair practice. In conjunction with the suggestions of Prior Learning Assessment Network (PLAN) and the May-Tree foundation action plan, it would be the position of this study to recommend the following that:

- (i) The settlement sector that mostly handles immigrant settlement concerns must be seen as a genuine/justifiable participant in the whole integration and settlement process of foreign professional immigrants.
- (ii) Immigrant's settlement and employment concerns should be seen as a disentangle connection that, thus, requires constructive coordination between Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC) and Human Resources Development Ministry (HRDC).
- (iii) Since immigrants settle in provincial jurisdictions, there should be a more constructive as well as productive conversation between CIC, HRDC and the provincial government on how to best resolve the immigrants' settlement process.
- (iv) Since immigration is a federal responsibility, there should be a more substantial exchange of ideas between federal ministries, provincial government, relevant ministries and the regulatory bodies on how to best resolve problems associated with immigrants' credentials recognition and employment concerns.
- (v) Since most Canadian employers are skeptical about immigrants' work experience, employers should be given tax inducement to set up paid internship in order to provide immigrants with the Canadian experience and opportunity they require.
- (vi) The idea of "Canadian experience" should be set straight by providing consistent evaluation tools across the board for different regulatory bodies and employers to assess the skills and qualifications of immigrants.

(vii) Mechanisms should be set up at the point of entry for immigrants where they can have access to information on Canadian labour market requirements according to different professions/trades.

(viii) The need for proactive consultation in terms of community and academic participation in the program planning and development stages. In this sense, Co-op type training programs which include on-the-job training should be funded by federal, provincial and private funds in order to facilitate the entry of immigrants in to the Canadian labour market.

Based on the principle of equity and fairness, the above recommendations fall within the assumption that all who are qualified should be able to work; and that all the jurisdictions who adopt this premise and an appropriate plan of action should be able to reap the benefit of all immigrant skills and experience. These recommendations are not offered as final, but rather as suggestive of directions in which future scientific research efforts might be undertaken.

## **8. Conclusion:**

This study noted that the primary barriers individual foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades immigrants experience in securing employment in the Greater Toronto Area are requirements that immigrants must acquire the equivalence in terms of Canadian standards. These barriers include the inability to meet occupational entry requirements, lacking Canadian experience, and inadequate command of English and French languages. There is no doubt that the period of residence in Canada spanning from one to ten years to become citizens has a crucial impact on the ability of immigrants to receive returns for their high educational attainments. Therefore a lack of Canadian job experience and failure to meet Canadian professional standards severely affect the professional and skilled-trades immigrants.

The structural barriers in the recognition of foreign credentials of professional and skilled-trades immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area by both the gatekeepers and employers of labor constitute systematic exclusion and occupational disadvantages for professional and skilled-trades immigrants that have chosen to spend of their life in Canada and contribute their quotas to the development and progress of the country.

The content in this study reveals that foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades immigrants encounter difficult conditions in the Canadian labor market. The foreign professional and skilled-trades work experience they brought into Canada, essentially the GTA, are not recognized. They are disqualified from entry into professional jobs leaving them no chance to acquire Canadian work experience. On the other hand, the emphasis on Canadian work experience as a requirement for professional employment makes it difficult for immigrants to be qualified for professional and skilled jobs.

There is no doubt that foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades immigrants brought significant human capital resources to the Canadian labor force. The devaluation of their education and credentials including their long years of job related experience together with demand for Canadian experience are by no mean major barrier to labor-market integration among the immigrants. As a consequence of these barriers, immigrants suffer from occupational downgrading, forced to switch careers and experienced loss of social status. It is the view of the most foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades immigrants that Canadian immigration policies tricked them into the situation they found themselves as the labor-market regulation failed to disclose that their qualifications and experience would be devalued upon entry into Canada, in particular, the Greater Toronto Area.

In brief, many immigrants come to Canada with professional skills and experiences that represent significant cultural capital that should benefit both the immigrants and Canada. However, a variety of obstacles/barriers have been identified in the sections above that seems to prevent these immigrants - especially visible minorities - from gaining re-accreditation and thus maximizing their contributions to their new country. Re-accreditation agents may use arbitrary standards in accepting or rejecting the qualifications of immigrants; there is a general lack of ability to translate foreign credentials into Canadian standards; re-accreditation processes may require time and resources that some immigrants lack; Canadian professionals may exclude foreign trained persons in order to preserve their professional advantages and interests; racist assumptions within society as a whole may function to the detriment of visible minority immigrants, stereotyping them as different and inferior; and lack of English (or French) language skills may also pose a barrier to immigrants seeking to gain professional recognition and employment within Canada. Therefore, it is not one factor but many that make it difficult for foreign trained immigrants to find work in their fields within Canada, and these barriers are even stronger for visible minority immigrants. The above mentioned obstacles, which are structured within the system in relation to how foreign trained professionals are treated in Canada, thus contradict the general impression that Canada is a promise land for immigrants.

It is very clear that the prosperity of any nation or state depends on building an economy based on superior skills and high standard, the skills that foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades immigrants bring to the Greater Toronto Area are capital gain for the economy and benefit for the community. Apparently, there is urgent need to better understand how these human resources are actually used. It is essential for federal and provincial governments as well as professional organizations to understand how highly educated foreign-trained professional

immigrants establish themselves in the labor force and what systemic barriers they encountered. It would be beneficial for the Greater Toronto Area to increase opportunities for the foreign-trained professional and skilled-trades immigrants to work in their field of specialization while the gatekeepers should eliminate barriers that are preventing them from continuing employment in their chosen trade and reaching their full potential. If such attention is not paid, it might lead to a situation where the Canadian economy as well as the health of the immigrants will be in jeopardy.

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